340

Senior Secondary Course

GENDER STUDIES

1

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF OPEN SCHOOLING
(An autonomous institution under Ministry of Education, Govt. of India)
A-24/25, Institutional Area, Sector -62, NOIDA -201309 (U.P.)
Website: www.nios.ac.in, Toll Free No.: 18001809393
ISO 9001:2015 CERTIFIED

विद्याधनम् सर्वधनं प्रधानम्

NIOS SENIOR SECONDARY - GENDER STUDIES (340)

Complete Textbook (20 Lessons)

Table of Contents

1. Lesson-1 3
2. Lesson-2 19
3. Lesson-3 39
4. Lesson-4 51
5. Lesson-5 73
6. Lesson-6 87
7. Lesson-7 105
8. Lesson-8 131
9. Lesson-9 153
10. Lesson-10 167
11. Lesson-11 181
12. Lesson-12 199
13. Lesson-13 215
14. Lesson-14 241
15. Lesson-15 259
16. Lesson-16 273
17. Lesson-17 291
18. Lesson-18 305
19. Lesson-19 315
20. Lesson-20 333

Notes

1

GENDER STUDIES : AN INTRODUCTION

Human society identifies people through various identity markers like sex, gender, caste, race, nationality, region, religion, and so on. A man who describes himself as young, Tamil, Brahmin, Indian, postgraduate is giving us various markers of identity that he carries as part of his being. Gender, in that sense, is one of these classifying principles as it helps to put people in different categories based on their sex at birth. Let us understand this with the help of the conversation given below:

Radha: I will stop coming to school next month.

Seema: Why? Why do you want to stop coming to school?

Radha: My father cannot earn enough to give education to all of us, and my brother needs the education to get a job. My mother also goes to work and needs my help doing housework with her and caring for my younger siblings.

Seema: But, through education, you can also get a good job and help your family.

Radha: Yes, but my parents have decided to marry me off in 3-4 years and I will not be able to help them after marriage.

This conversation between two young girls explains how different roles are assigned according to our gender. For example, Radha's education is neglected as the parents think about the boys as the future bread earner for the family. But household work is taken as the responsibility of female members of the household, like Radha and her mother. These different perceptions about males and females constitute the sex-gender system. For example, males are considered as physically stronger than females. Later in this module, we will question this simple understanding of sex as biological and gender as social.

Society has assigned different roles for boys and girls. There are certain things which boys perceive as boys' activities, but girls are not expected to do them. Dress codes are different for boys and girls. Their treatment in the family and society is also different. This lesson is going to provide you the scope to understand role of women's movement in emergence of Gender Studies as a discipline. The lesson will also help you to comprehend the relationship of Gender studies with other discipline.

Notes

OUTCOMES

After studying this lesson, learner:

- explains the role of women's movements in the emergence of gender Studies
- describes Gender Studies as a discipline
- describes the need and rationale for the study of Gender Studies
- explains the interdisciplinary approach to Gender Studies as a body of knowledge

1.1 WOMEN'S MOVEMENT AND GENDER STUDIES

1.1.1 The background

The history of Gender Studies as a discipline is contexualised in the various women's movements that emerged in European countries and the United States of America (USA) during the 19th and 20th centuries. These movements helped in raising awareness about women's views and concerns. In the USA, the women's movement in modern times started with the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848, focusing on social, civil and religious conditions and the women's rights.

1.1.2 Beginning of women's right to vote

DO YOU KNOW?

Wyoming was the first territory or state in America to grant women suffrage in the 1869. Louisa Ann Swain was the first woman in the United States to vote in a general election on September 6, 1870, in Laramie, Wyoming. After a few decades, Finland granted voting rights to women in 1906, Norway in 1912, Great Britain in 1928, Spain in 1931 and France in 1945.

The second phase of the women's movement in western countries started in 1960s with struggles around equality in education, employment opportunities, and reproductive rights. Finally, the third wave began in the 1990s with a focus on issues of violence against women, autonomy and equal opportunities.

1.1.3 Women's movement in India: The early years

The women's movement in India took off in the 1920s, building on the 19th century social reform movements. The major achievements of the social reform movement were:

- Abolition of *Sati* in 1829
- Enabling widow remarriage in 1856.
- Fight against gender-based discrimination by women like Rassundari Devi, Pandita Ramabai.

Social Reform Movement in India In the 19th century, one sees the emergence of a number of reform movements. Some of these were

- Abolition of Sati
- Prohibition of Child Marriage
- Widow Remarriage
- Education of Women

ACTIVITY 1.1

Can you identify the social reformers associated with these movements?

Pandita Ramabai, Anandibai Joshi, Tarabai Shinde, Haimavati Sen and Saraladevi.

Some of the important women's associations involved included the Women's Indian Association (1917), the National Council of Indian Women (1925) and the All-India Women's Conference (1927). This phase lost momentum with Independence in 1947 as the Constitution of India guaranteed formal equality to women. This was the time when the spirit of nationalism was very high and there was a belief that the ideals of democracy and equality would automatically address gender inequality.

1.1.4 Women's movement in post-independent India in the 20th century

A report by a Committee on the Status of Women in 1974 highlighted the inequality and discrimination faced by women in India. The feminists in the 1970s thus once again mobilised the feminist movement in India. There were protests by women against rising prices, violence, gender discrimination, liquor prohibition, and environmental issues. These women came from different castes, classes, communities, and rural and urban backgrounds. It put women's issues back onto the centre stage of national politics. The 1980s saw huge mobilisation against rape cases and dowry deaths. These struggles resulted in some legal reforms like the Dowry Prohibition Act 1961 and further amendments in dowry prohibition rules in the form of The Dowry Prohibition (Maintenance of Lists of Presents to the Bride and Bridegroom) Rules in 1985., amendments in the Indian Penal Code to modify provisions related to rape in 1983 and 2013.

Notes

Notes

Some Tribal Women Leaders

Tribal history has seen many brave women from indigenous communities. Even though there is a great diversity in tribal communities across India and their feminist movements are diverse nevertheless they are similar in their ideology. These women have made a mark in society and have influenced countless women. Some of these are as follows:

- Rani Durgavati Wasa ruler of the Gondwana kingdom and fought against the Mughals.
- Rani Gaidinliu from Nagaland fought against the British.
- Rani Chennamma from Kittur again fought against colonial rule.
- Other tribal women leaders include Sayani Barla, Kuni Sikala, Jamuan Tudu, Neidonuo Angami and Soni Sori.
- We are all familiar with sportswomen like Dutee Chand, Mary Kom and Dangmei Grace.
- Tulasi Munda from Odisha was awarded a Padmashri for her work on education for tribal children.
- Padmashri Tadisaru Bai is a poetess from Odisha and has over 50,000 devotional songs in Odia, Kui and Sanskrit.

The contemporary movement in women's struggle for equality is connected with the larger political and economic contexts at both national and international levels. Communalism, caste-based politics, and the impact of globalisation, have thrown up new challenges. The challenges are from women from minority communities, Dalit women and women from the North-East and other women whose voices could not be represented within and by the earlier women's movement. They challenged the upper class and caste bias of the women's movement. This led to movements like the Dalit women's movement- Dalit Mahila Samiti in Uttar Pradesh.

Fig: 1.1 Participation of Women in Chipko Movement

INTEXT QUESTIONS 1.1

1. Where did women initially get the right to vote?
2. What was the focus of the Women's movement in the early phase?
3. Why did the women's movement restart in the 1970s?

ACTIVITY 1.2

Identify the various tribes in India. Also, list at least one-woman achiever from each of the tribes. This could be a woman from the present times too.

1.2 GENDER STUDIES AS A DISCIPLINE

1.2.1 The beginnings

The women's movement discussed briefly in the above section was directed at questioning women's continued subordination, exploitation and oppression in a male-dominated world and fighting to establish a more equal and just society. The struggle for equality also reached universities and other educational institutions, where feminist scholars started questioning the existing patriarchal frameworks through various subject areas or disciplines in the universities. When we look at the history of various disciplines like Sociology, Economics, Political Science, History, it is not difficult to conclude that the key thinkers of these disciplines are men, and they brought a gender-neutral or gender-blind perspective to the study of their disciplines which did not include women. Women were neither there as the creators of the disciplinary knowledge nor as the subjects of these disciplines.

DO YOU KNOW?

Father of economics is Adam Smith

Father of History is Herodotus

Father of Political Science is Aristotle

Father of Sociology is August Comte

There are no 'Mothers' of any discipline. This in itself highlights the male centric bias in many disciplines.

Notes

ACTIVITY 1.3

Can you identify some women scholars of the 17th and 18th centuries?

These movements had a huge impact on the academic world and resulted in the emergence of Women's Studies as an area of research and teaching in the US in the 1960s. Feminist scholars started addressing the absence of women in their respective disciplines.

Gradually, many critical thinkers pointed out that disciplines will have to change their perspectives and acknowledge that leaving out women or any other marginalised social group will not only result in our knowledge being biased and incomplete but would also keep women in a marginalised position till this gap is addressed. These criticisms not only questioned the frameworks in place but also provided a new and inclusive framework, thus contributing to the growth of the disciplines by including women and their issues.

For example, feminist historians started questioning why History was more about men. It was through stories of wars, conquest, trade relations, or managing the empire, among others. Women were mostly absent in these stories or were mentioned occasionally and/or briefly. Feminist scholars first made attempts to make women visible by highlighting their lives and conditions as subjects of human history.

1.2.2 Gender Studies in India

In India, Women's Studies as an area of study took root during the 1970s with the establishment of the first Research Centre for Women's Studies (RCWS) in 1974 at the SNDT University, Mumbai. The Centre was to undertake research, teaching, documentation, publication and community outreach activities aimed at gender equity. The RCWS soon became the model adopted by the University Grants Commission, New Delhi to develop Women's Studies Centres in Indian universities.

Starting with struggles by feminist scholars within disciplinary frameworks, these interventions helped to strengthen the relatively new area of Women Studies where the focus was on the evaluation of the existing position of women in the social, economic, political and religious context.

The studies made under the area of women's studies not only developed critiques of gender blindness of various disciplines but also proved complementary by opening up areas of research which were till then not taken up for study.

Another important feature of the Women's Studies centres and courses was that strong links to women's movements, activism, feminist ideas and practices were maintained. It was the coming together of theory and practice to change the world in a positive way.

Notes

Gradually, it was realised that studying merely about women and their concerns and issues would also be incomplete and biased if their relations with men are not taken up as part of the framework. Women's Studies framework thus appeared to be inadequate in addressing new issues and research questions that were being raised. Thus, a new area, known as Gender Studies, started taking shape. The term 'Gender Studies' is more inclusive, accommodating men, masculinity and other sexual minorities. However, defining it as a discipline such as History, Economics, or Political Science is difficult. As a result, some people see it only as an area of study rather than an autonomous discipline.

1.2.3 How Gender Studies is a discipline

Gender Studies is a significant area of inquiry today, which is interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary at the same time. It is not limited to any one discipline or subject in particular. It yet establishes a connection with and between all disciplines, as this area of Gender Studies is about life itself.

The initial attempts by feminists at theorising women's subordination included making a distinction between sex and gender because biological differences between men and women have been cited to justify the subordination of women. These differences were explained as natural, and hence it was not possible to change them. Feminist theorists tried to prove that while sex is natural, gender and the roles associated with each gender are assigned by a particular society in a given time period. Hence, these can be changed over a period of time.

Many anthropological studies support that masculine and feminine behaviours differ in different societies at different periods. In India, Veena Poonacha has studied Coorgi women in Karnataka and how actively they cultivated land and even hunted in pre-modern times. Gender roles can thus be learned as well as unlearned. Cooking at home in Indian society is still seen as a woman's job but men can do it equally well, we just have to learn it. Similarly, girls can play with guns and cars and boys can play with dolls and kitchen sets to unlearn rigid gender roles learned through socialisation. Feminists like Alisan Jaggar have now questioned the difference between sex and gender, as even biology gets affected by social norms. If women are encouraged to have slender bodies, according to prevalent beauty norms, it is also because dietary prescriptions are different for each gender. Male and female bodies are thus also a product of culture.

Gender Studies, as a discipline, helps understand the workings of gender in various settings. This field includes Studies (Focussing on women, feminism, gender, and politics), Studies, and Studies. It draws on knowledge from the humanities, social sciences, medicine, and natural sciences.

We have gendered the whole world around us. In Indian society, even in contemporary times, behavioural traits like bravery, aggression, competitiveness, rationality, and physical strength

are related to masculinity. On the other hand, patience, sentimentality, and nurturing are seen as feminine qualities. These understandings of masculine and feminine influence not just our ideas but also the material products we use in everyday life ranging from clothes and computer designs to the images of gods, goddesses and mythology. Over time these distinctions become so much a part of ourselves that we start calling these understandings 'natural' and hence unchangeable. It is this 'naturalness' that Gender Studies attempts to question.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 1.2

1. What roles do classifying principles like gender play?
2. What is the subject of inquiry for Gender Studies?
3. Are gender roles natural?

1.3 RATIONALE OF GENDER STUDIES

The idea of bringing Gender Studies to school curriculum has been discussed and worked upon for quite some time, and the National Education Policy of 1986 saw education as "an agent of basic change in the status of women". It thus argued for an interventionist role by the National Education System in the empowerment of women. The increased cases of sexual violence in the recent past have made it imperative to introduce Gender Studies as part of the school curriculum. The course is trying to reach out to young people through education in order to work towards a more gender-just society. The education system, in close interaction with other stakeholders, is facing the challenge of keeping itself updated with the concerns of young people so that they are better informed and accordingly make informed choices in their lives. Gender, one of the primary classifying principles in society, assumes significance in this endeavour of the state and other agencies. As the twin forces of modernisation and globalisation have brought in development and social change, girls and women are becoming more visible in the public sphere, be it educational institutions, public transport, offices, or other public spaces. The nature of these places has changed. This change has brought into light new concerns like how to make these spaces safe for all. It is not just about women but also for men and transgender, transsexuals, sexual minorities and people from other marginalised social groups.

Since this course will focus on gender inequalities and related issues, you will learn about the workings of gender on a social, cultural and psychological level and help you learn to use the gender perspective in studying other disciplines. Learning about some key concepts and debates of Gender Studies will open up areas of discussion which can help you develop greater gender awareness and sensitisation. It will also help you understand and appreciate the diversity of gendered experiences and perspectives among human beings. As a learner, you will also

realise that gender roles are not fixed and are different in a given society at different times and different across cultures and affect every facet of society. You would be learning about key terms and concepts such as sex, gender, sexuality, embodiment, masculinity, other genders, feminism(s), patriarchy (ies), sexism, and systems of oppression. It will give learners the opportunity to be self-reflective. Introducing Gender Studies will develop analytical and critical thinking skills, and help teachers and learners in creating an equitable classroom environment. It can train learners to recognise and challenge harassment in the classroom and workplace. A better understanding of the classroom's diversity will help learners treat others with respect.

Gender role stereotypes are continuously being reproduced by various sites and agencies like family, law, media, educational system, medicine and popular culture among others. It will require interventions at far greater levels to challenge, minimise and/or eliminate stereotypical perceptions and actions towards the 'other' gender(s). By questioning these stereotypes, the learners will learn to accept and support the career and life choices made by peers, even if they may challenge gender role stereotypes like a boy will not be laughed at for declaring that he wanted to become a chef and neither will a girl be laughed at for expressing her desire to be a fighter plane pilot! You would also learn to stand up for somebody who challenges gender stereotypes. You will be able to develop independent thinking regarding culturally standardised gender roles.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 1.3

1. Explain the main objective of introducing Gender Studies in the school curriculum?
2. Name the term used for describing differential treatment based on one's sex?

1.4 INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

Gender Studies teaches learners to critically reflect on how knowledge is produced, to ask new questions, to open up new areas of study and research, and not restrict their role to learning theory. The learners also put their questions and knowledge into practice by bringing their gendered life experiences to the classroom. Then, they take this critical but valuable perspective to other disciplines. For example, a student of History can ask why women are missing from the History texts; a student of literature can ask why women writers were few in earlier times and could get their work published if they wrote under a pen-name of a man only; and so on. Different disciplines have started integrating gender perspectives but sometimes differ in their approaches to how and why they study gender.

Gender Studies, as an interdisciplinary field, focuses on the multiple interactions of gender with other identity markers such as race, ethnicity, sexuality, nation, and religion. The interdisciplinary study emerged in response to the incomplete answers to social problems provided by the

Notes

disciplines. It was realised that rather than working in water-tight compartments in the name of disciplinary boundaries, reaching out to other disciplines to make learning more meaningful for social transformation will be better. This borrowing between and among disciplines was vertical and horizontal and essential for developing a critical field like Gender Studies. The following sections briefly discuss the relationship between different disciplines and Gender Studies.

1.4.1 Education and Gender Studies

There is a close relationship between Gender Studies and Education. Gender Studies help learners to critically reflect on knowledge formation, ask new questions and open up new areas of learning and skill development. The learners also put their questions and knowledge into practice by bringing their life experiences to the classroom. A child's experiences within the school and the classroom create a deep image of 'gendered identities'. They understand the implications of social expectations based on the roles assigned to each 'sex'. This is because school acts as the primary socialising agency for the child. Many Studies have pointed out that certain textbooks portraying negative images of girls or women, or writing about them in only stereotypical ways, normalises gender discrimination that they experience in their everyday interaction and has a lasting impact on their young minds. Hence, education and Gender Studies are closely interwoven, and conscious changes in curriculum and pedagogy can help introduce learners to the values of gender equality. The learners can then take this critical but valuable perspective to other disciplines.

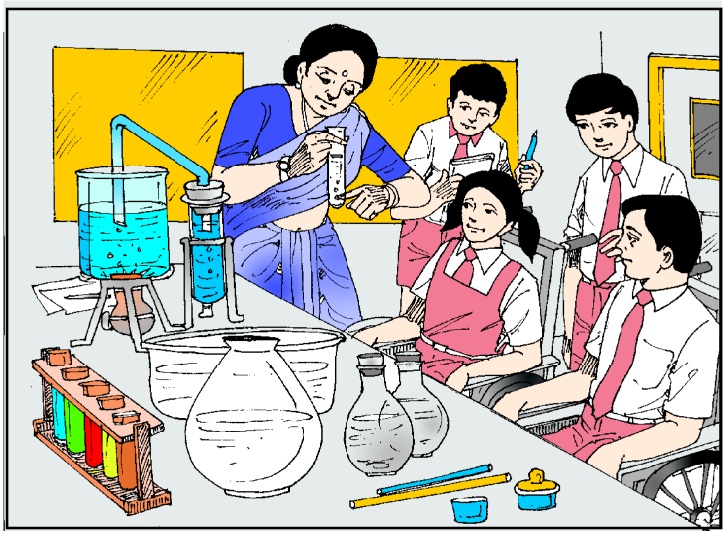


Fig: 1.2 Learners attending science practical session

1.4.2 Economics and Gender Studies

Similarly, Gender Studies and Economics also have a close relationship. Gender role stereotypes usually define the responsibilities that 'men' and 'women' have. For example, domestic work,

Notes

including child rearing, was considered women's work while men were seen as bread earners of the family. When feminist scholars started questioning the conventional understanding of Economics, attention was diverted to the nature and value of housework and women were seen as producers and not just consumers of the family. Women paid and unpaid work was gradually recognized, changing our understanding of the concept of work itself. It also helped in bringing women into the policy framework of governments and employers.

Fig: 1.3 Women in a Tribal Market

1.4.3. Political Science and Gender Studies

Another discipline that has benefitted from Gender Studies is Political Science. It had been a male-dominated discipline with key thinkers being men, and their theories have also been male-centric. Feminist thinkers like Carole Pateman have questioned the basic premises of the social contract theory of the origin of a state as it did not theorise how women came to be a part of civil society. Political theory needs to focus on including women in its imagination of concepts like citizenship, nation, politics and development. Political parties worldwide are becoming conscious of women and trying to include gender issues in their manifestoes. In India, the 73rd and 74th Amendments, which gave 1/3rd representation to women in rural and urban local self-government, has been a huge step in ensuring women's political participation and empowerment. Appointment of Shrimati Draupadi Murmu as 15th President of India, the world's largest democracy is a part of Saga of women's empowerment. She is the first tribal person and second woman to serve as President of India. The Women's Reservation Bill for ensuring greater participation at the parliamentary level is still pending and may be enacted soon. Despite having a woman Prime Minister in Indira Gandhi and many women as Chief

Notes

Ministers in various states, we still have a long way to go to ensure gender parity in political participation.

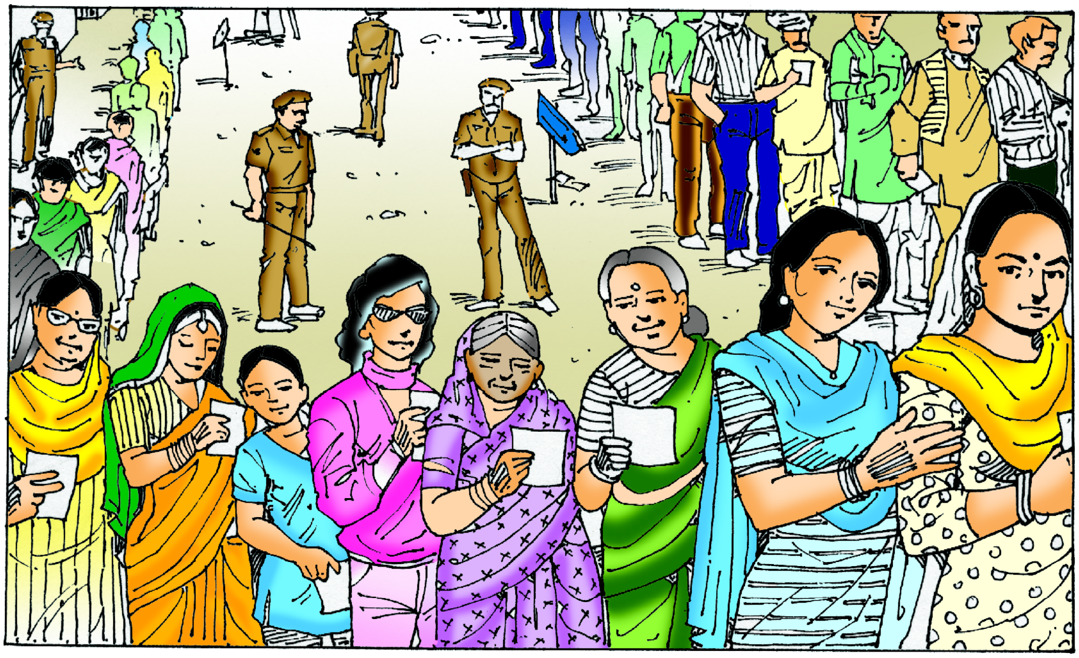


Fig: 1.4 Increase in Participation of Women in Politics

1.5 GENDER AND EVERYDAY LIFE

The Interdisciplinary nature of the study is evident as it opens new paths of inquiry and offers fresh approaches to many key issues. The important role played by the difference between sex and gender, biological determinism or sexism to establish and question women's subordination has already been discussed. The questioning of gender inequality through various disciplines has helped in drawing attention to crucial issues from a gender-sensitive perspective. The social construction of masculinity and femininity has helped in understanding the power dynamics at work in gender relations. The struggles for sexual and reproductive rights have helped in raising awareness around questions of choice, consent, violence, abortion rights, and discrimination inherent in social arrangements and institutions like marriage, caste and religion, among others. Gender Studies has helped in questioning the notions of an ideal body. For example, advertisements that promote fairness creams, sell appliances to help women become better homemakers, encourage men to provide all facilities to their families by making good financial decisions and buying the right insurance policy and so on. These stereotypes are continuously being challenged by ordinary men and women in contemporary times and the division of work between the genders is getting blurred due to various factors like better education and employment opportunities for women, growing number of nuclear families, exposure to more egalitarian cultures through globalised media and improved and accessible means of transport, supportive policies by government and employers. These changes in our

everyday lives indicate social change, and we need a conscious move towards a gender-just society. Integration of a gender-sensitive perspective in curricula, content and pedagogy is thus important to make education and educational spaces more gender inclusive. This is what this course aims to do.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 1.4

1. How is Gender Studies interdisciplinary?

2. What is the relationship between Gender Studies and Economics?

3. How do Gender Studies help a person in their everyday life?

DO YOU KNOW?

1. Why Women's Day

   International women's day is celebrated on 8th of March every year. It shows that society respects and accepts women's role as equal partners.

Glossary:

Biological determinism – The belief that human behaviour is governed by biology and social environment has no role to play in it. It is used to justify the differential treatment of males and females.

Feminism – The belief in social, economic and political equality of the sexes; it opposes any discrimination based on sex or gender.

Patriarchy – A social and political system based on male domination over women and younger or marginalised men where inheritance is through the male line. Men hold political power and define social, political, economic and religious norms, formally and informally.

Sexism – Biases, prejudices, discrimination and stereotyping on the basis of sex or gender, usually directed at women and girls.

Sexual division of labour – Work is assigned on the basis of one's gender like women are better at cooking and men are better at driving.

WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

In human society, people are identified by different indicators like sex, caste, religion, build, race and nationality. Sex is one of the most important indicators. Sex and Gender are different. Sex is biological whereas gender is a specific set of meaning assigned to a particular sex society. Sex cannot be changed, but gender can be changed.

Various women's movements raised awareness about the discrimination between men and women. As a result, countries like USA and UK granted the right to vote to women. In India, women have the right to vote. Moreover, the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments ensured 33% reserved seats for women's political participation in local governance.

This course on Gender Studies is interdisciplinary and linked with history, political science and economics. Its study as a discipline established the need for society based on equality.

ACTIVITY

1. Interview your family members about their understanding of gender roles. Do you think they always behave according to the ideal which they describe?
2. Try to find out about gender role expectations in other communities. Are they different from those of your community?
3. Do you change your actions and activities when you are in the presence of the other gender? How and why?
4. From the list of jobs below, tell which occupation is for male, female or both. Try to think why a person from a particular gender is preferred for some of these jobs, and will it be a problem if a person from the other gender also starts doing it?

   Construction Worker

   Flight Attendant

   Social Worker

   Secretary

   Elementary Teacher

   Hair Stylist

   Model

Store Clerk

Veterinarian

Physical Education Teacher

Cook

Photographer

Nurse

Computer Analyst

TERMINAL EXERCISE

1. Why Gender Studies is an important discipline? Support your answer with arguments.

2. Name any five occupations which were taken as Male occupations. Have women replaced men in each of their occupations? Give examples.

3. Do you agree that men and women have equal participation in all jobs? Support your answer with examples.

ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

1.1

1. Wyoming was the first territory or state in America to grant women suffrage in 1869. Louisa Ann Swain was the first woman in the United States to vote in a general election on September 6, 1870, in Laramie, Wyoming. After a few decades, Finland granted voting rights to women in 1906, Norway in 1912, Great Britain in 1928, Spain in 1931 and France in 1945.

2. The women's movement in India took off in the 1920s, building on the 19th century social reform movements (See Box 1.1). The major achievements of the social reform movement were:

   - Abolition of Sati in 1829
   - Enabling widow remarriage in 1856.

3. A report by a Committee on the Status of Women in 1974 highlighted the inequality and discrimination faced by women in India. The feminists in the 1970s thus once again mobilised the feminist movement in India.

Notes

1.2

1. They are used to give different identities to people, and accordingly, their status in society gets defined. Men and women have different roles in society
2. Gender Studies focuses on the working on gender relations in various settings.
3. No gender roles are socially constructed.

1.3

1. The main objective is to work towards establishing a gender-just society
2. Sexism is the term used to describe differential treatment based on one's sex.

1.4

1. Interdisciplinary Gender Studies emerged in response to the incomplete answers to social problems provided by the disciplines. Gender Studies helps a learner develop a critical perspective that can be applied to other disciplines. For example, a student of History can ask why women are missing from the History texts; a student of literature can ask why women writers were few in earlier times and they could get their work published if they wrote under pen-name of a man only; and so on.
2. Gender Studies and Economics also have a close relationship. When feminist scholars started questioning the conventional understanding of Economics, attention was diverted to the nature and value of housework. Women were seen as producers and not just consumers of the family. Women's paid and unpaid work was gradually recognized, changing our understanding of the concept of work itself. It also helped in bringing women into the policy framework of governments and employers.
3. Gender Studies teaches learners to critically reflect on how knowledge is produced, to ask new questions, to open up new areas of study and research, and not restrict their role to learning theory. The learners also put questions and their knowledge into practice by bringing their gendered life experiences to the classroom.

2

GENDER: MEANING AND CONCEPT

Gender is a part of our everyday lives. It is an integral part of who we are. We conduct ourselves and interact with others based on our gendered identities. We encounter our gendered selves in many ways. For example, while filling up an exam form or any other form, we are often required to tick a box which says sex 'male' or 'female'. This is done as a matter of routine. We do it unthinkingly. Our gendered identity is an inherent part of who we are. Do we even think that the name we have is again gender specific? If we call someone Lata, Amira or Sarah, we know that it is a girl's name. We know it will be a boy if we call someone Michael, Imran or Naveen. We may think that being a man or a woman is associated with the sex of the physical body we are born with. However, our interaction with individuals will again depend on whether they are men or women. All interactions, in some way or another other, are structured through this identity. If you read carefully, you will realise that the term 'sex' has been used somewhere and in other places, the term 'gender' has been used. What is the difference between the two? Are they linked to one another? If yes, then in what ways? These are some of the questions we will answer in this lesson.

OUTCOMES

After studying this lesson, learner:

- differentiates between sex and gender as biological and social categories;
- explains the social norms associated with the gendered identity as a male, female or transgender;
- explains masculinity and femininity in different cultures;
- describes gender socialisation and different agencies;
- understands the factors that shape our gender identity and
- explains sexuality and various types of sexual orientations.

2.1 UNDERSTANDING OF SEX AND GENDER – CHANGING PERCEPTIONS

One of the first lessons that we learn is that associated with gender. Placement in a sex category is achieved through primary sex characteristics or based on chromosomes XX for females and XY for males. Biologically, the presence of a XX chromosome will make a human being female, and an XY chromosome will make a human being male. However, the understanding of gender goes beyond the simple matter of the XX or the XY chromosome. In this chapter, we will understand gender from the perspective of society.

When a child is born, the doctor or the nurse will declare, "Congratulations! It is a boy (or a girl)'". This very declaration gives us our gendered identity. All our subsequent identities are based on this one identity. Our names, actions, and social relationships are all based on our gendered identity. There is also the question of those who do not fall into either male or female categories.

The earlier understanding of gender was that sex has to do with nature, and gender has to do with culture. This meant that for an individual, *sex* was biological, i.e. an individual was either a male with an XY chromosome or a female with XX chromosome. Sex refers to physical or physiological differences between males and females, including primary sex characteristics (the reproductive system) and secondary characteristics such as height and muscularity, deep voice, facial hair, etc.

Gender was assumed to be a product of one's sexual identity. It is generally assumed that those who have primary and secondary sexual characteristics will also fall into the gender category of a man or a woman. This means those with XX chromosomes and female primary and secondary characteristics will play the role of women, and those with XY chromosomes and male primary and secondary characteristics will play the role of men.

In a common sense understanding, 'sex' and 'gender' are assumed to coincide, i.e. those with the physical characteristics of females will be like women, and those with physical characteristics of males will be like men.

This also assumes that men will play the conventional social masculine roles and dress and behave accordingly. The same is assumed for women. We will discuss more on this in Section 2.2.

Sex

- Sex refers to physical or physiological differences between males and females, including both primary sex characteristics (the reproductive system) and secondary characteristics such as height and muscularity, deep voice, facial hair etc.

Notes

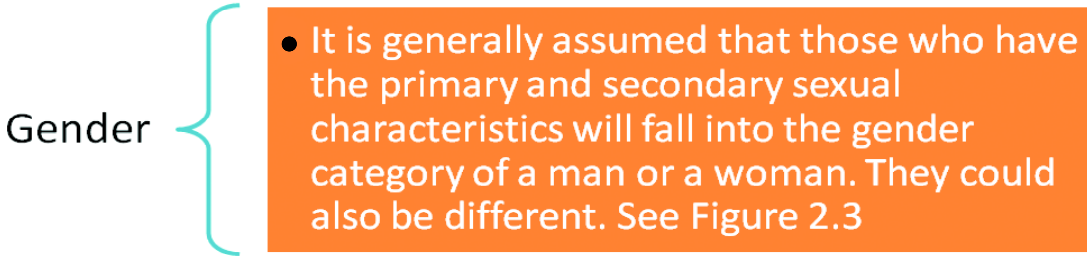


Figure 2.1: Understanding Sex & Gender

Understanding Relationship between Sex and Gender- Oakley

As individuals, we need to ask ourselves, is it so easy to classify the nature of maleness or femaleness? The term 'sex' itself is ambiguous. Do we mean 'sexual activity' by the term sex? Or are we referring to the physiological characteristics of being male or female?

In academic language, we generally use the term 'sex' to refer to the physiological characteristics of an individual and the term 'gender' to refer to the social, cultural and psychological differences between males and females. Gender is used to refer to socially constructed notions of masculinity or femininity.

Writers followed this understanding of sex and gender on gender, like Ann Oakley, a British sociologist. Oakley defined sex based on anatomical and physiological characteristics and gender as socially constructed masculinity and femininity. She said one becomes a man or a woman through social and cultural processes.

In this understanding of sex and gender, one assumes that gender will automatically follow from sex. This means that if you are a human being with XY chromosomes and primary and secondary sex characteristics of males, then your gender (social identity) will be that of a man. On the other hand, if you have XX chromosomes and the primary and secondary sex characteristics of a female, then your gender identity will be that of a woman. In this understanding of sex and gender, one assumes that gender will automatically follow from sex.

In everyday life, this categorisation as a male or female is established and sustained through socially recognised behaviour. There are specific normative criteria by which an individual is labelled as a male or a female. In addition, certain attitudes and activities are deemed appropriate for one's sex category. These criteria are transmitted to us through the process of socialisation.

Our gendered identity is an integral part of our identity. We cannot imagine interacting with others without knowing their gender. Children become aware of gender roles in their earliest years. This awareness is generated through the process of socialisation. Section 2.2 will discuss this further. Through socialisation, society establishes a dominant and conventional standard about being a male or a female. The implications of establishing a dominant standard of masculinity or femininity will be discussed in **Section 2.4**.

This may not always be true, as we shall see in the next section (Section 2.2). *Biological identity may not determine an individual's gendered identity.* We shall discuss more of this in the case of transgender in **Section 2.5.**

INTEXT QUESTIONS 2.1

1. What gives us our gendered identity?
2. What is the difference between sex and gender?
3. How does Ann Oakley explain sex and gender?

2.2 GENDER SOCIALISATION

Gender socialisation is the key to understanding how attitudes related to gender are internalised. Learning gender roles is important in understanding how one becomes a man or a woman. Through socialisation, one learns the norms associated with one's gender. This implies that they understand and perform these roles through socialisation through agents like the family, peer group and mass media. Socialisation happens actively and passively. Actively, the children are consciously taught gender-appropriate ways of conducting themselves. However, a more powerful way of learning is passive learning which happens through observations and is unconsciously learnt.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 2.2

1. What is meant by gendered socialisation?
2. How does socialisation take place actively?
3. How does socialisation occur passively?

2.2.1 The Family

The family is a primary agent of socialisation. Through the different ways they treat their children, parents have a powerful impact on gendered socialisation. Through a system of rewards and punishments, parents reinforce certain patterns of behaviour. This is visible in the toys, games and activities associated with girls and boys. For instance, in some societies, a girl is expected to play with toys like dolls, kitchen sets, etc. Conversely, a boy is expected to play with more masculine toys like guns and cars.

Any attempt by a boy to play with the 'girlish' toys or play 'girlish' games is discouraged. When boys play girlish games and behave like girls, and when girls behave and play like boys, this is referred to as cross-gender play. Cross-gender play in boys is punished. Even in activities and games, boys are supposed to indulge in more rough games. Boys are supposed to be tough. Girls, on the other hand, are supposed to be dainty and delicate. In girls' cross, gender play is not punished so severely, at least till they attain puberty. Apart from these, there are different ways in which a boy and girl are supposed to sit, talk, walk and generally conduct themselves.

The roles that women and men play within the family and society also have a powerful impact on gendered socialisation. Children observe their mother, father, and others in their extended families while growing up. They observe the roles that they play in the household and society. For instance, in some societies, women may be associated with child-rearing, caring and household activities. Men may be involved in more outdoor activities. Women may be more emotional and easily display emotions; Men, on the other hand, do not cry or generally display emotions. They also observe how men conduct themselves. The impact of parents is all the more potent since the parents are in a position of authority vis-à-vis the children.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 2.3

1. How do parents socialise their children?
2. How does the family act as a passive agent of socialisation?
3. What is cross-gender play?

2.2.2 The Peer Group

The role of the peer group in gendered socialisation is also quite prominent. Unlike in the case of parents, socialisation through peer groups is more dialogic and less authoritative. The peer group, too, influences the pattern of socialisation. It is visible in sex-segregated play, i.e. boys and girls do not typically play with one another and play separately. The pattern of games and activities again reinforces the norms of society. For instance, in a society discussed earlier, boys will be ridiculed and made fun of by their peer group if they behave like girls. This kind of interaction consciously and unconsciously again conveys to the children the norms associated with gender. Girls learn to behave as girls are supposed to behave, and the same is valid for boys.

Notes

INTEXT QUESTIONS 2.4

1. Explain the role of peer groups in socialisation.
2. How is peer group socialisation different from socialisation by parents?
3. What is sex-segregated play?

2.2.3 The Media

The media like television, films, computer games, newspapers, magazines and even stories again influence the pattern of gendered socialisation. Television, for example, often shows programmes where women are younger than men; women are shown as being traditional and doing household chores. Women are generally shown to be dependent on men and do not play an important role in decision-making. Conversely, men are shown as being more outward going, aggressive and authoritative. These unconsciously become role models for children, and they emulate these reel characters without realising them. The way that the reel characters dress and the way that they behave has a very powerful impact. Computer games, too, have become a source of socialisation. If a woman is in distress in a game and has to be rescued, then often reinforce the patterns where a man has to play the role of a hero. These, again, are patterns for emulation by both boys and girls. Television advertisements, too, become a source of socialisation where men and women play specific roles.

Famous stories like the Panchatantra, the Ramayana, or other folk tales may reinforce similar roles of men and women.

Thus we see that society, through socialisation, will try to train those with primary and secondary sex characteristics of men or women to behave and conduct themselves in a certain way. This will include how you dress, how you walk, and how you sit and generally conduct yourself in society. All the different sources of socialisation often reinforce each other. If they show similar roles being played by men and women, then conscious and unconscious men and women learn to follow specific behaviour patterns.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 2.5

1. Name the different kinds of media that influence socialisation.
2. Explain the impact of real characters on the people.

2.3 GENDERED SOCIALISATION: EXAMPLES FROM ACROSS THE WORLD

The examples given in Section 5.2 for all agents of socialisation have consciously been taken from societies similar in the roles men and women play. These may be societies that you are familiar with. However, these are examples of patriarchal societies where men are supposed to be aggressive, and women are passive.

B.B. Whiting and J.W.M Whiting, in their 1975 book Children of Six Cultures: A Social Psychological Analysis, compared child-rearing practices in six cultures- North America, Philippines, Mexico., India, Kenya and Japan. Their findings revealed that all parents' goals were to teach children how to survive, develop family attachment and learn appropriate gender roles. In all these societies, girls were encouraged to spend more time with their mothers and to learn household tasks. Boys were expected to do outside tasks like feeding and herding cattle so that they grow up to be men who are leaders, work outside their homes, manage family affairs and to be aggressive and confident. Girls were expected to grow up to be caretakers and look after the children and the family.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 2.6

1. What is the name of the book by B.B. Whiting and J.W.M. Whiting? What is the book about?
2. What were the findings of Whiting and Whiting?

2.3.1 Examples from Simple Societies: Margaret Mead

Margaret Mead, an anthropologist, studied gendered socialisation patterns that differed from the societies we have discussed so far. In her book, Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies (1935) wrote about the cultural differences in maleness and femaleness in three societies in the Papua New Guinea region. All these three societies were located within a 100-mile radius. These societies were the Arapesh, Mundugumor and Tchambuli.

Amongst the Arapesh, men and women were equal. There were no clearly defined roles for both. Instead, there was a single-sex pattern. Men and women were both peaceful and nurturing. They were gentle, loving and cooperative. Men, for example, during childbirth, imitate their wives and took to bed. Both of them 'bear a child'. Boys and girls are raised to follow these traits.

The men and women amongst the Mundugumor were both aggressive and warlike. They were ex-cannibals and were arrogant, fierce and warrior-like. Pregnancy and child-rearing as activities were disliked. Both men and women were masculine.

Amongst theTchambuli (also called Chambri), women are aggressive and dominant. The women caught fish and also travelled to trade fish. The men were not aggressive. Instead, they primed and preened and also emulated female maternal roles.

Mead's study was significant when published as it highlighted different cultures. However, Mead's study of the three tribes was later criticised. However, that will not be discussed here.

In this section, we discussed that there are variations between cultures as far as sex and gender roles are concerned. However, through the different examples, we have also shown that biological sex is not linked to social sex or gender. If it were linked, then the cultural variations we discussed would not have existed, and men and women would have been the same across cultures.

In the next section, we will discuss how, within a society, there may be variations.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 2.7

1. What did Margaret Mead study?
2. What were the names of the three societies studied by Mead?
3. What were the traits of men and women in Arapesh?
4. How were the men and women socialised in Mundugumor?
5. What were the differences between men and women amongst the Tchambuli?

2.4 HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY & FEMININITY

In the discussion on socialisation, we saw that each society has a dominant pattern of behaviour for men and women. This means that all men are expected to behave in a particular manner. For example, in the book by Whiting and Whiting, Children of Six Cultures: A Social Psychological Analysis, all boys are expected to do outside tasks like feeding and herding cattle so that they grow up to be men who are aggressive and confident. Girls were expected to grow up to be caretakers and look after the children and the family.

Mead's study showed us an alternative pattern of masculinity and femininity. It is assumed that they follow the dominant norms and patterns of being a man or woman specific to their society. This form of dominant sexuality is known as hegemonic masculinity in the case of men and hegemonic femininity for women.

This becomes the dominant pattern of behaviours for men and women. Therefore, all socialisation is directed towards bringing up boys and girls in the expected way.

Nevertheless, all men and women do not necessarily follow the dominant or hegemonic patterns in society. Individuals may modify or reject expectations surrounding sex roles. For example, some men may like to cry and are not very aggressive, brave, or adventurous. They may not be 'typical' men. Some women, too, may not behave as per the expectations of the dominant forms of femininity. For example, some women may like to be brave and adventurous. They are referred to as tomboys. Such behaviour is tolerated till girls attain puberty. After that, through negative sanctions, they are forced to conform to the dominant norms of being a girl.

Some such individuals rebel against social norms and behaviour patterns. Sometimes, it may be a mild form of rebellion, and the individuals may outgrow this phase. In other cases, they may feel very strongly about this and decide to do something about it. They feel they are in the wrong body. We shall discuss more on this in Section 5.5.

Hegemonic Masculinity

- Dominant male charachteristics of a culture. Like being aggressive, not crying, bread winner, boys playing with cars etc.

Hegemonic femininty

- Dominant female charachteristics of a culture like being nurturing, caring, emotional and soft, girls palying with dolls etc.

Figure 2.2 : Dominant Masculinity & Femininity

INTEXT QUESTIONS 2.8

1. What is hegemonic masculinity?
2. What is hegemonic femininity?
3. Who are tomboys?

2.5 TRANSGENDER

In some cases, an individual may be born a male with the primary and secondary physiological characteristics of a male. However, they may feel they are in the wrong body and need to be a female. Therefore, they may dress up as a woman and sometimes even undergo medical procedures to become a woman. The same may be the case with a biological woman. Such individuals change their 'gender' and do not go with the 'gender' they were born with. These individuals are called transgender.

The behaviour process according to a particular gender is called 'doing gender'. So, for example, a biological man can pass off as a woman and vice versa.

A transgender individual differs from their assigned sex (biological sex). For example, there are trans men and Trans women. Sometimes, they may undergo medical procedures like surgeries and/or hormone therapies to become a man or a woman. These may be from a biological male to a female (Mto F). It may also be from a biological female to a male (F to M). The opposite of transgender is cisgender, people whose gender identity matches their assigned sex.

Transgender, thus, are people whose gender does not follow their sex, i.e. their biology. Biological females, i.e. those with XX chromosomes, may choose to live in society following the gender norms of men. The vice versa is also true. They may even undergo a sex change medical procedure, thus challenging their natural sex. This is very different from what we discussed in Section 5.1.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 2.9

1. Who is transgender?
2. Who are cisgenders?
3. What does the term 'doing gender' mean?

2.5.1 Inter-Sex Individuals

Transgender is often confused with Intersexual people. Intersex people are individuals who have both male and female genitalia. Intersex people are born with sex characteristics that lie between those typical males and typical females. People with intersex conditions have anatomy that is not considered typically male or female. Older terms include the word hermaphrodite. Transgender or transsexuals are usually born with typical male or female anatomies but feel they are in the wrong body.

The Case of Agnes

Agnes was an individual born in 1939. Agnes was born with a penis and testes. She was raised as a male. As she grew up she began to develop female secondary characteristics like breasts. By age 17 Agnes started dressing up as a female. She behaved like a woman, dressed, walked and talked like a woman. She passed herself off as a woman. She even got married to a man. This was one of the first cases of'doing gender and also of an intersex person. She was studied by Harold Garfinkel, an American sociologist in 1960s. When Agnes met Garfinkel she believed herself to be a female.

Notes

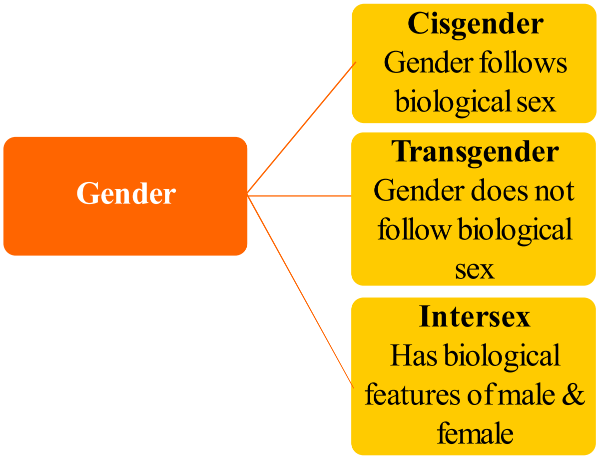


Figure 2.3: Gender Does Not Always Follow Biological Sex

INTEXT QUESTIONS 2.10

1. Who are Intersex people?
2. What is the older term for intersex people?

2.6 SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Sexual orientation refers to a person's sexual and romantic attraction. There are four types of sexual orientations:

1. Heterosexuality
2. Homosexuality
3. Bisexuality
4. Asexuality

Heterosexuality

Heterosexuality is the dominant form of sexuality. In this, a person is attracted to the opposite gender.

Homosexuality

Homosexuality is an attraction to a person of the same gender. Homosexual men are referred to as gay. Homosexual women are commonly known as lesbians.

Bisexuality

Bisexuality refers to sexual attraction to both sexes. Men and women are attracted to both men and women.

Asexuality

Asexuality is the lack of sexual attraction to people of either sex.

Individuals who think of themselves as heterosexual may also have homosexual experiences, and the reverse is also true. Transgender does not refer to sexual orientation but to ways of behaving to challenge the dominant patterns of masculinity or femininity. They may be homosexuals, heterosexuals, bisexuals or asexuals. Their sexual orientation may be a combination of one or more types.

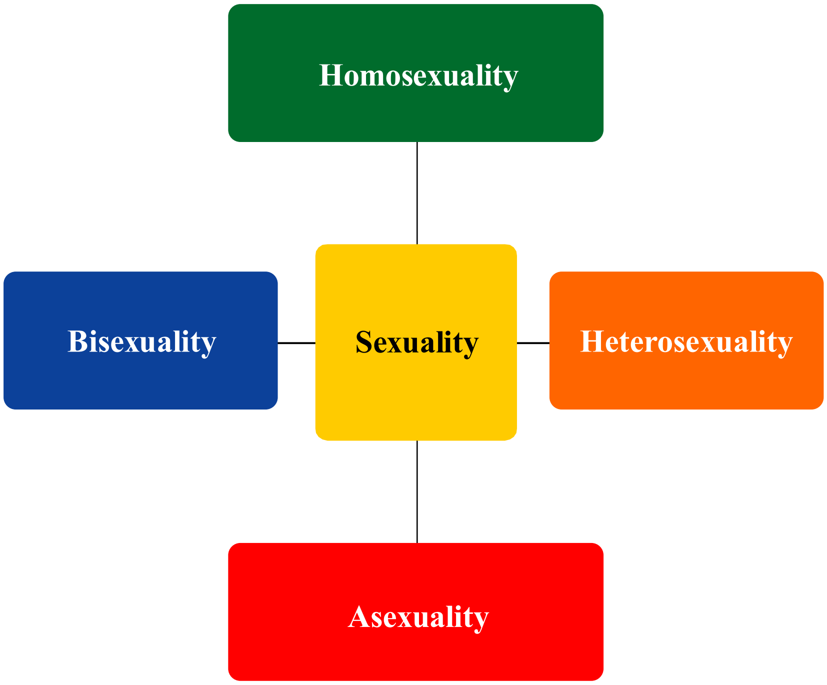


Figure 2.4: Sexual Orientation

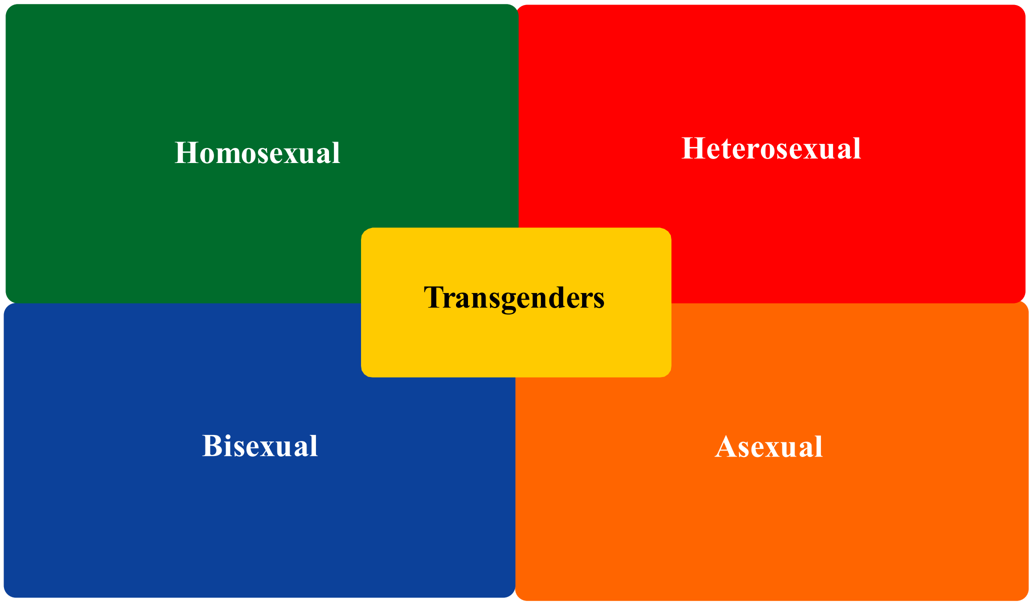


Figure 2.5: Sexuality of Transgender

Notes

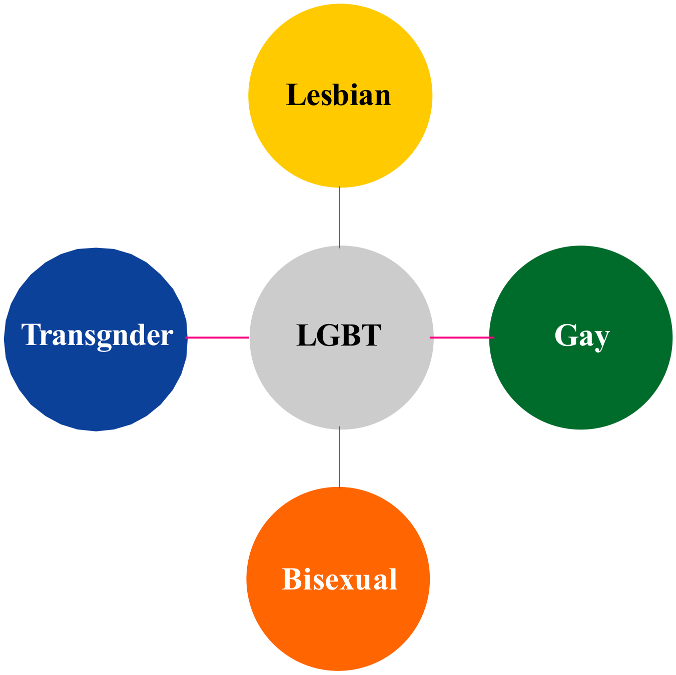


Figure 2.6: LGBT or Queer

The Rainbow Flag

Also known as the Gay Pride Flag was designed by Gilbert Baker in 1978. It represents the diversity in the LGBT community. It does not represent the original colours of the rainbow. Each stripe stands for an issue like sex, life, healing, light etc. There are variations of the same.

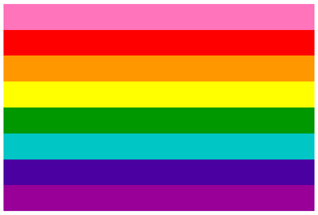


Figure 2.7: Rainbow Flag

Queer

The term Queer is used as a slang for the LGBT community. Delhi Queer Pride Parade is organized by members of the Delhi Queer Pride Committee every last Sunday of November since 2008.

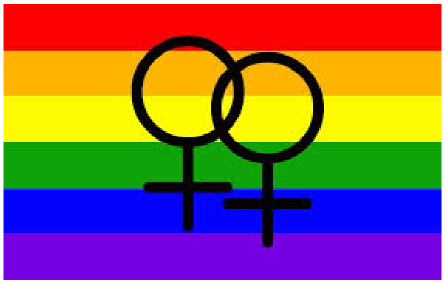


Figure 2.8: Symbol of Queer Community

Notes

Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT)

This is a term that all of you may have heard very frequently. It refers to all of the above. The UN in 2011 passed a resolution stating that any discrimination against the LGBT community as a violation of human rights. Discrimination against homosexuals is also considered a violation of human rights.

As of March 2017, 23 countries, the overwhelming majority of which are developed democracies and the rest being developing democracies, recognize same-sex marriage.

As of August 2017, 73 countries as well as five sub-national jurisdictions have laws criminalizing homosexuality.

with effect from 6 September 2018 In India, Homo-sexuality is not a crime, However, same sex marriages are still illegal and the matter are still debated in the court.

The Lambda

Figure 2.9: The Lamba

A greek symbol was adopted as the official symbol of the gay and lesbian rights in 1974. It was selected for the first time in early 1970s by Tom Doerr to be the symbol of the New York chapter of the gays and lesbians.

The Black Ring of Asexuality

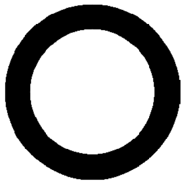


Figure 2.10: Symbol of LGBT

The Symbol of Bisexuality

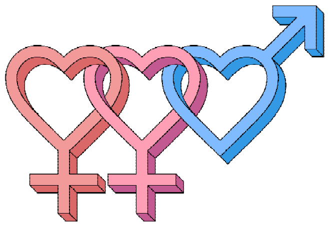


Figure 2.11: Symbol of Bisexuality

INTEXT QUESTIONS 2.11

1. What is the meaning of the term sexual orientation?
2. What are the different types of sexual orientations?
3. What is the sexual orientation of transgender?

WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

In this lesson, we have learnt that sex and gender are different. Social gender does not follow biological sex. This we saw in the case of transgender.

We also learn how societies establish standards of behaviour for men and women through socialisation. Socialisation can be active or passive. Moreover, there are different agencies of socialisation.

We also discussed examples of socialisation in societies all over the world. Mead's study highlighted different patterns of socialisation in their different societies.

Sexual orientation is also an important part of gender. There are different types of sexual orientations. An individual's sexual orientation may change over time. The concept of masculinity and femininity may also vary in culture over some time. At the beginning of the twentieth century, a traditional family consisted of the father as the primary breadwinner and the mother as someone who stayed home and looked after the household and children. The men were supposed to be strong and brave at all times. Men were not supposed to do any work in the kitchen or in the household. These were considered to be a woman's tasks. Masculinity depended on being a working man and on being the primary breadwinner. Even though women did start working outside the home, they were still expected to do the household chores. However, this dominant notion of masculinity and femininity has begun to change. We find many men who are soft, display emotion and may not be the primary breadwinners. Men and women have also started to share the household chores.

TERMINAL EXERCISE

1. What is the understanding of sex and gender according to Oakley?
2. Why was Oakley's understanding of sex and gender questioned?
3. What is the importance of gendered socialisation?

4. How do the roles men and women play in society lead to gendered socialisation? Give examples.

5. Write an essay on peer group socialisation.

6. Examine the role of media in socialisation.

7. What is the importance of the study by Whiting and Whiting?

8. What is the significance of Mead's study? Give examples from the societies studied by her.

9. What is hegemonic masculinity & femininity?

10. Who is transgender?

11. Explain the term, intersex people.

12. How are transgender different from intersex people?

13. What does the term doing gender mean? Where do you see it? Give examples.

14. What is sexual orientation? Explain the different types of sexual orientations.

15. Define the following terms:

    a. Transgenderisms

    b. Cisgenders

    c. Intersex People

    d. Homosexuality

    e. Heterosexuality

    f. Bisexuality

    g. Asexuality

ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

2.1

1. Our names, actions, and social relationships are all based on our gendered identity. This awareness is generated through the process of socialisation.

2. Sex is biological and natural, i.e. an individual is either a male with an XY

chromosome or a female with XX chromosome. Gender was assumed to be social and a product of one's natural (sexual) identity. It is generally assumed that those who have primary and secondary sexual characteristics will also fall into the gender category of a man or a woman.

3. In a common sense understanding, 'sex' and 'gender' are assumed to coincide, i.e. those with the physical characteristics of females will be like women, and those with physical characteristics of males will be like men.

4. Oakley defined sex based on anatomical and physiological characteristics and gender as socially constructed masculinity and femininity. She said one becomes a man or a woman through social and cultural processes. In this understanding of sex and gender, one assumes that gender will automatically follow from sex.

2.2

1. Gendered socialisation means the learning of gender roles. It is important to understand how one becomes a man or a woman. Through socialisation, one learns the norms associated with one's gender. This implies that they understand and perform these roles through socialisation through agents like the family, peer group and mass media.

2. Consciously, the children are taught gender-appropriate ways of conducting themselves.

3. Passive socialisation is powerful in learning gender roles. It takes place through observations and is unconsciously learnt.

2.3

1. Parents treat their children in different ways, have a very strong impact on gendered socialisation. Through a system of rewards and punishments, parents reinforce certain patterns of behaviour.

2. The roles that women and men play within the family and society also have a powerful impact on gendered socialisation. Children, while growing up, observe their mother and father and others in their extended families. Likewise, they observe their roles in the household and society.

3. When boys play girlish games and behave like girls, and when girls behave and play like boys, this is referred to as cross-gender play.

Notes

2.4

1. The peer group, too, influences the pattern of socialisation. For example, it is visible in sex-segregated play, i.e. boys and girls do not typically play with one another and play separately.
2. Socialisation through peer groups is more dialogic and less authoritative. However, on the other hand, socialisation by parents is more authoritative.

2.5

1. The media that influence socialisation are radio, television, computer games and films.

2.6

1. The name of the book by Whiting and Whiting is Children of Six Cultures: A Social Psychological Analysis. It compared child-rearing practices in six cultures- North America, the Philippines, Mexico., India, Kenya and Japan.
2. Whiting and Whiting's findings revealed that the goal of all parents was to teach children how to survive, develop family attachment and learn appropriate gender roles.

2.7

1. Margaret Mead, an anthropologist, studied patterns of gendered socialisation. In her book, Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies (1935) wrote about the cultural differences in maleness and femaleness in three societies in the Papua New Guinea region.
2. These societies were the Arapesh, Mundugumor and Tchambuli.
3. Amongst the Arapesh, men and women were equal. There were no clearly defined roles for both. There was a single-sex pattern. Men and women were both peaceful and nurturing. They were gentle, loving and cooperative. Men, for example, at the time of childbirth, imitate their wives and took to bed. Both of them 'bear a child'. Boys and girls are raised to follow these traits.
4. The men and women amongst the Mundugumor were both aggressive and warlike. They were ex-cannibals and were arrogant, fierce and warrior-like. Pregnancy and child-rearing as activities were disliked. Both men and women were masculine.
5. Women are aggressive and dominant among the Tchambuli (also called Chambri). The women caught fish and also travelled to trade fish. The men were not aggressive.

Notes

Instead, they primed and preened and also emulated female maternal roles.

2.8

1. In all societies, boys are expected to behave in a certain manner. For example, they are expected to be strong and aggressive. This form of dominant sexuality is known as hegemonic masculinity.
2. In all societies, women are expected to behave in a specific manner. For example, women are expected to be caregivers and perform roles inside the homes. This form of dominant sexuality is known as hegemonic femininity for women.
3. Girls who behave like boys in their society are called tomboys.

   Some women, too, may not behave as per the expectations of the dominant forms of femininity. For example, some women may like to be brave and adventurous. As a result, they are referred to as tomboys. Such behaviour is tolerated till girls attain puberty; after that, through the negative sanctions, they are forced to conform to the dominant norms of being a girl.

2.9

1. A transgender person is an individual who differs from their assigned sex. For example, there are trans men and Trans women.
2. Cisgenders are people whose gender identity matches their assigned sex.
3. The behaviour process according to a particular gender is called 'doing gender'. So, for example, a biological man can pass off as a woman and vice versa.

2.10

1. Intersex people are individuals who have both male and female genitalia. Intersex people are born with sex characteristics that lie between those typical males and typical females.
2. Older terms include the word hermaphrodite.

2.11

1. Sexual orientation refers to a person's sexual and romantic attraction.
2. There are four types of sexual orientations:

   i. Heterosexuality

   ii. Homosexuality

iii. Bisexuality

iv. Asexuality

3. Transgender may be homosexuals, heterosexuals, bisexuals or asexuals. In addition, their sexual orientation may be a combination of one or more types.

3

GENDER IN HISTORY (PRE-COLONIAL PERIOD)

With the help of sociological concepts like role and status, we can understand the conditions of Indian women through three main historical phases of Indian history, namely ancient, medieval, and modern. The 'role' can be defined as duties and obligations, while status can be defined as rights. Historians rely on archaeological sources like sculptures, coins and monuments complimented by the literary sources of religious, semi-religious, and secular texts to reconstruct the history of Indian women. Based on extensive research on this topic, we can find two approaches, such as classical or textual views and empirical views, for understanding the status and role of women through historical ages. The evolution of the status and role of women in India has been a continuous process through the centuries.

Various socio-economic and cultural factors, both internal and external, contribute to the present status of Indian women. This lesson mainly focuses more on the status and role of women during ancient and medieval periods than the modern period, which you are already familiar with.

OUTCOMES

After studying this lesson, learner:

- describes the role and status of women in ancient India, consisting of pre-historic, Vedic and post-Vedic periods to the Post-Gupta period
- explains the status and roles of women during the medieval period, starting from the 11th Century to the 18th Century.

3.1 THE ROLE AND STATUS OF WOMEN IN ANCIENT PERIOD

3.1.1 Women in Ancient Indian Literature

The sacred literature of Hinduism advocates that women are to be honoured and respected.

Many Hindu scriptures show the honour and esteem bestowed upon women. It is stated that a woman must be loved, well-fed and cared for. Such views are frequent in religious and semi-religious literature in ancient India. We have many stories about obedient, dedicated and faithful wives. For example, Sita is considered a great model of Indian womanhood, a faithful wife of Rama, following him into exile and facing many hardships. Likewise, Savitri followed her husband Satyavan when he was being taken away by the god of death, 'Yama', and the god had to release her husband as having been impressed with the loyalty of his wife 'Savitri'.

3.1.2 Pre-Historic Period

In the pre-historic or the earliest known civilization of India- the Indus Valley civilization- women enjoyed equal status and held a very honourable position in society. From various archaeological or historical sources, it is found that the deities of the Indus Valley people were predominantly "mother goddesses", and they exhibit a prevalence of a matrilineal system. It shows the strong and highly respectable position of women in the Indus valley.

3.1.3. Early Vedic or Rig Vedic Age

The Vedic civilization can broadly be classified into early Vedic or Rig Vedic (1500BC to 1000BC) and the later Vedic age (1000BC-600BC). Even though Indian society transformed from a matriarchal to a patriarchal system under the Vedic age, women were treated fairly in the early Rig Vedic age. Though the birth of sons was preferred and welcome, the birth of daughters was not condemned and frowned upon. The birth of a girl child was not considered a liability. No cases of infanticide were reported. The Vedas accorded respectable positions to women as they were permitted to receive religious education and conduct rituals and sacrifices. They could pursue the life of religion but were not permitted to become priests. Women were generally discouraged from taking up a life of religion or asceticism. Women had the freedom to choose their partners, and marriage was not compulsory for women. The rite of 'Upanayana' was performed by a Gurukul to learn the Vedas. Some women are also said to have been authors of Rig Vedic hymns. The early poetess Avviyar in the Tamil region of South India left behind a great work of literary merit. During this period, many learned women, namely Gosha, Apala, Lopamudra, Indrani, Maitreyi and Gargi, participated in the political, intellectual and philosophical discussions and debates.

? DO YOU KNOW?

According to the Brihadaranyaka Upnishad (seventh century B.C.) Gargi was a learned woman philosopher. She was a great mathematician and was invited to participated in various debates and discussions.

Notes

Early Vedic women enjoyed freedom in choosing their life partners. This system was known as "Swayamvar". In some cases, they freely interacted with young men. Marriages were performed after puberty. No child marriage or the system of 'Purdah' is reported during that period. There were cases of unmarried women as well. To cite an example, a woman named Ghosha remained unmarried and lived at her parents' home.

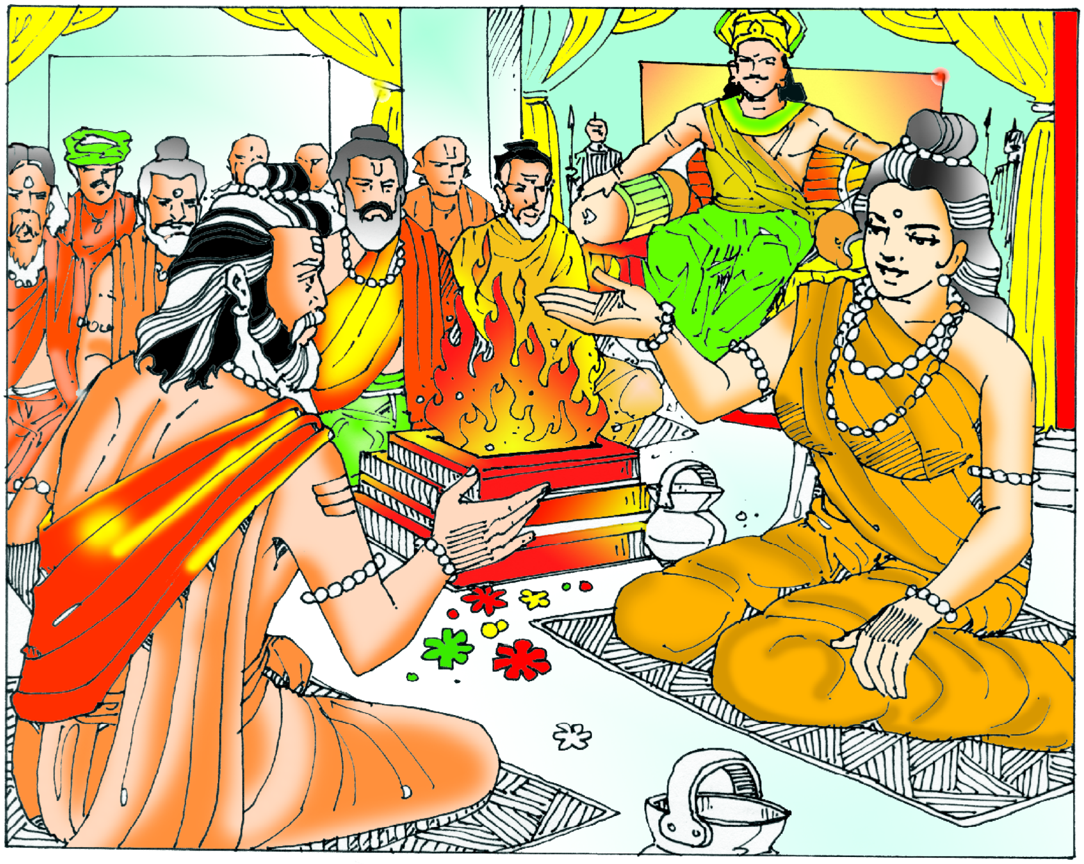


Fig. 3.1 Debate of women philosopher Gargi with a Hindu philosopher

? DO YOU KNOW?

About Ancient Indian Civilization A well-known economic historian R.C.Dutt published a book in 1889 titled *A History of Civilisation in Ancient India*. He narrated the achievements of the ancient past, beginning with the 'Vedic Age'. He mentioned that the unique feature of ancient Indian civilization was the better status of women. He wrote: 'Still more [appealing] to us is the picture of cultured ladies who were rishis and composed hymns and performed sacrifices like men. There were no unhealthy restrictions against women in those days.'

Women enjoyed high respect for playing different roles in the early Vedic age. They did not confine themselves to household activities only; but stepped out into different fields such as

teaching, medicine, business, politics, administration, and military. At the same time, however, women had no right to hold, acquire or dispose of the property. 'Stridhana' received from their parents at marriage was their exclusive property. In the absence of widow remarriage, women's safety was assured under the joint family system. However, a childless widow could cohabit with her brother-in-law until the birth of a son. This practice was known as the 'Niyoga system'. Thus, despite the family's patriarchal character, women's roles and positions were much better in the Rig Vedic period than in subsequent times.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 3.1

1. Explain the kind of status accorded to women during indus valley civilization.
2. Discuss how birth of girls were perceived in comparison to birth of girls during early vedic age?
3. Describe the practice of 'Niyoga system'.

3.1.4 Later Vedic Age

During the later Vedic phase lasting from 1000 BC to 600 BC, the system of patriarchy became stronger, resulting in the degradation in the role and status of Indian women. The birth of sons was preferred over the birth of daughters. As the family lineage was traced through the male line, the birth of sons over daughters assumed much more significance. Further, sons were the sole heir of family property. The belief that the birth of sons would grant parents liberation from rebirth also facilitated the importance of sons. The practice of Sati (Self-immolation by widows) can be traced back to this period. According to the text of Athreya Brahmana, a good woman does not talk back. Thus, the freedoms of women were curtailed. No marriages outside the gotra were allowed. Monogamous marriages were preferred. Women had to stay with their husbands at their place after marriage.

3.1.5. The Period of the Epics

Great epics like Mahabharata and the Ramayana were compiled during the later Vedic period. These two epics have strongly influenced Indian society and the attitude towards women in general. The courage, will-power, and valour of Kaikeye, Sita, Rukmani, Satyabhama, Savitri, Draupadi and others were appreciated. The Ramayana is a classic example of the ideal Hindu woman, which glorifies the value of 'Pativrata'. Sita is considered the ideal Hindu woman as she

surrendered all her desires and followed her husband to the forest. The Mahabharata also outlines the duties and attitude of the wife toward her husband. The self-imposed blindness by Gandhari is an example of the respect and honour she upheld for her blind husband. In the

Notes

Mahabharata, Draupadi exhibits much courage and independence. Both Sita and Draupadi are universally respected despite their subjugated position to their husband. There are a few instances of Sati in the Ramayana and Mahabharata. In Ramayana, there is only a single reference to the immolation of the 'Vedavalis' mother. Otherwise, the wives of Dasharatha or Ravana did not commit Sati. Similarly, in the case of Mahabharata, only 'Madri' commits Sati. 'Kunti', the wives of Abhimanyu, Ghatotkacha and Drona, did not perform Sati, but instead, we find a reference to the remarriage of a child widow in the Mahabharata. So, the practice of Sati was more of an exception than a rule during this time.

3.1.6 The Age of Dharma shastras (3rd century BC to 4th century AD)

The later Vedic texts like Smritis, Dharma shastras and Puranas laid down various codes of conduct, resulting in women's status deterioration. This period witnessed the social exclusion of women from economic and religious spheres. They were denied the ability to offer sacrifices and prayers, practice penance or undertake pilgrimages. Vedic knowledge was closed to women, although the various religious sects still supported them in getting religious education. Women became dependent on men as they were denied education and other freedoms. The two important legal texts, Manu Smriti and Yagnavalkaya Smriti, prescribed the legal code of conduct for womenfolk during the later Vedic period. Manu Smriti, composed around second century BC, provided a strong Indian patriarchal social structure.

The Hindu lawgiver Manu believed that women must be kept under the control of their father during childhood, under the tutelage of their husbands after marriage and then under the control of their son during old age. So, she should not be given freedom at any stage of life. In contrast, Manu later said, "*God lives where women are venerated*". One can find contradictions in his views about the status of women. Yagnavalkya Smriti advocated for early marriage for girls before the attainment of puberty.

Moreover, the Dharma shastras preached that marriage is necessary for women's salvation. As a result, it became an unavoidable ritual for women. Child marriage was encouraged, and widow marriage was looked down upon.

The birth of a girl child was considered bad luck, facilitating the practice of infanticide. Child marriage became customary. No widow remarriage was allowed, and the practice of Sati became common at this point. During this age, women became entirely dependent on men and lost all types of freedoms available to men.

In the post-Vedic period, the condition of women got worse because of the rigidity of the caste system, based on the ideas of purity and pollution. Women were considered to be impure in different stages of life. They were confined to the house's four walls, and their primary responsibility was to care for their children and husbands. A woman played the role of sacrificing mother, chaste wife or obedient daughter. By and large, the decline in the status of women began during this period.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 3.2

1. Identify the time period of the later Vedic age.
2. Name two of the later Vedic texts.
3. Discuss the kind of marriage system followed during later vedic age.
4. Name two epics of Indian literature.

3.1.7 The Period of Buddhism and Jainism

Buddhism and Jainism emerged around the 6th Century BC as protest movements against Vedic Hinduism. In the post-Vedic period, Indian society witnessed the strong influence of the caste system and ritual-based life. Vedic Hinduism led to the emergence of these two major religions. It was to promote an alternative philosophy against the prevalent caste system and the practice of mindless ritualism. So, it attracted the common man and spread far and wide. Both religions attacked the subjugation of women and advocated fair treatment for them.

Buddhism has unleashed a new horizon of freedom for women because it permitted them to get education to become missionaries and remain unmarried. It opened its doors to all human beings belonging to all strata of society, including women and even prostitutes. Buddha stayed as a guest in the house of Ambapali, a prostitute in the town of Vaishali. Women also could achieve 'Nirvana' like men in Buddhism. Women were permitted to become 'Sanyasis' and had their Sangha called 'the Bhikkhuni Sangha", which allowed them to be activated in public life. Many women monks composed verses which came to be known as Therigatha.

DO YOU KNOW?

Bhikkhuni Sangha (Order of Nuns)

At the request of Buddha's stepmother, Maha Pajapati Gotami, Buddha instituted Bhikkhuni Sangha or Order of Nuns with certain conditions. As time passed, it expanded and produced many noble and saintly women. It was a great blessing for women otherwise living in unfavourable circumstances. The Sangha admitted women drawn from all strata of society, comprising queens, princesses, daughters of noble families, widows, bereaved mothers, helpless women, ex-courtesans, and slaves, irrespective of their caste, class and creed. Lower caste women could also attain salvation through their spiritual quest through Sangha. Undoubtedly, it elevated women's dignity and status, as they could seek emancipation through the Sangha.

The royal princess and Buddhist monk, Sanghamitra, was the eldest daughter of 'Asoka the Great'. She was dispatched to spread the canons of Buddhism in various parts of India and the world.

Jainism, founded by Vardhamana Mahavira, advocated the doctrine of 'Non harming' and 'non-violence'. Women were allowed to give up their families to become ascetics. Many women joined the sect during the time of Mahavira. Women were respected and given the freedom to decide for themselves.

Poems by Buddhist Nuns.

Jainism preached equality between both sexes. Like Buddha, Mahavira also admitted women to his order. The first female disciple of Mahavira is said to have been a captured slave woman. Women took different important roles in Jainism and served in its expansion. Women excelled in the political field and proved themselves as great warriors. According to Jaina tradition, a potter woman from the town of Sravasti owned one hundred potter wheels, which shows women's economic freedom during that time. In the era of Buddhism and Jainism, there was a great degree of freedom, rights, autonomy, and equality of opportunities for women. During this period, there was also the absence of crime and violence against women.

3.1.8 Ancient Women in Politics

In ancient India, Royal women played a significant role in politics. For example, Megasthenes mentioned the Pandya women running the administration in the Tamil region. In the Satavahana kingdom of the present Andhra region, a queen named Nayanika ruled on behalf of her minor son. Likewise, Pravabati, daughter of Chandragupta-II, ruled on behalf of her minor Vakataka prince. There were various instances during the post-Gupta period wherein queens ruled, such as in the Kashmir, Odisha and Andhra regions. Princess Vijaybhattarika was a provincial ruler under the Chalukya King Vikramaditya-I (655–680 CE).

The above description indicates that certain sections of women enjoyed freedom during the ancient period. Although there were contradictions and ambivalences about the status of women in ancient India, the historian A.S. Altekar sums up the overall conditions. He wrote that ancient Indian women by saying that 'on the whole' society showed concern, care and respect for women, giving them the freedom to take up various socio-economic and political roles.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 3.4

Fill in the blanks as given below.

1. Buddhism and Jainism emerged as ———— movements against Hinduism.
2. Jainism was founded by——————————.
3. Explain the term 'the Bhikkhuni Sangha".
4. What examples would you to choose to explain the economic freedom given to women during the period of Jainism.

Notes

3.2 THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

The medieval history of India starts roughly from the 11th Century up to the 18th Century. This period witnessed significant socio-economic and cultural changes in Indian society due to external invasions by the Turkish, Arab, and Mughal rulers of Central Asia. The credit for establishing the first Islamic empire in India goes to the Turkish ruler Shahab-Ud-Din alias Muiz-Ud-Din Muhammad of Ghur. Since his reign, Muslim kings' rule lasted for almost five hundred years until their downfall under British colonialism.

With the coming of the Turks, the practice of Purdah also spread to the lower castes. Earlier, it was the customary practice of the upper castes. Gradually the lower caste adopted these upper caste customs. Another evil practice, Jauhar, was introduced by the Rajput community, which curtailed the liberty and freedom of women. Jauhar means the self-immolation by Rajput women to protect themselves from being captured by the enemy. For example, when Rana Ratan Singh, the Rajput ruler of Chittor, was defeated by Ala-Ud –Din Khilji, his wife Padmini performed Jauhar along with other Rajput women. Based on this incident, Padmavat was written by Malik Muhammad Jaisi in 1540 AD.

Muslim women also did not enjoy a good status in society during this period. Polygamy was widely spread among Muslims. Marriage was a contract among Muslims. It was a man's prerogative to divorce his wife without paying any alimony. The purdah system was strictly observed among Muslim women. Though divorce was permitted between Muslim men and women, it had hardly any advantage for women. The Muslim women did not perform 'Sati' like Hindu women.

In contrast, the Medieval period had several capable and intelligent women who influenced the politics of their times. Women played a significant role in the affairs of politics. These include Sultana Razziyya of the Delhi Sultanate and many women in the Mughal period, such as Rani Karnavati, Rani Jodha Bai, Rani Durgavat, Rani Rupmati, Chand Bibi, Nur Jahan, Nur Jahan's mother Asmat Begum, Mumtaz Mahal, Jahanara, Roshanara, Jebunisa, Jija Bai (mother of Shivaji) and Tara Bai (wife of Raja Ram). During the Mughal period, Noor Jahan played a vital role in the administration. She is said to have formed a 'Janta' along with other nobles and wielded strong influence in administration during the rule of Jahangir.

? DO YOU KNOW?

Sultana Razziyya (1236-1240A.D.)

She was the first woman to open a new chapter in the history of the Delhi Sultanate by becoming its first Sultana or female ruler. Razia was the daughter of the third Delhi Sultan, Iltutmish. Her mother was Terken Khatun, the favourite wife of Iltutmish. She was trained in

warfare, horsemanship, administration, and diplomacy from childhood. She ascended the throne after deposing her brother. She was a tough soldier and an able commander who led the campaigns personally. She reduced the political influence of slave nobles on the throne and saved her kingdom from the attacks of Mongols. She dressed in male attire, sat on the throne without Purdah or veil, went hunting and horse riding and met the public without Purdah. In addition, she was a successful diplomat. Prof. K.A, Nizami writes, "The fact that she was the ablest of the successors of Iltutmish can hardly be denied.

3.2.1 Bhakti Movement

The Bhakti movement of Hinduism emerged in the medieval age and emphasized Bhakti as a means to attain salvation. It was a pan-Indian movement which began in the sixth and seventh centuries and gradually spread across the country up to the seventeenth Century. The Bhakti, or devotional movement, witnessed the emergence of lower caste and women saints. Spirituality provided a platform for self-expression to women in the dominant patriarchal society. Some of the women saints looked upon themselves as brides of the Lord. The classic example is Meerabai of Rajasthan. During this time, saints like Guru Nanak advocated for women's equality in various socio-economic, religious, political, educational, and cultural fields.

? DO YOU KNOW?

Meerabai

She was born to king Rana Ratan Singh and Veer Kumari in Kurkhi in Rajasthan during the 16th Century. A passing mendicant gifted a statute of Krishna to the child Meera. Her attachment towards Krishna grew over the years. Though she was married to the King Rana Kumbha (also known as Bhojraj) of Mewar, she considered herself to be the wife of Krishna. Although her husband died after a few years of marriage, refusing to perform Sati, as was expected of every Rajput widow, she continued her visits to the Krishna temple at Chittorgarh. She sang the songs in praise of her Lord Krishna Day and night. Her relatives scorned her as mad. She referred to herself as Diwani, or someone not in her senses. Her in-law's family did not like her behaviour. Eventually, it is believed that her brother-in-law decided to kill her by giving her a glass of poison. She accepted it and drank it with a smile and was believed to be saved by Krishna. However, when the torture became unbearable, she left Mewar, went to Brindavan, and later left for Dwaraka. Meera Bai broke many social norms of her time. She accepted Raidas (Ravidas), a Dalit by birth, as her guru, and she wrote her songs in Brajbhasha, interspersed with Rajasthani. Her poems may not be scholarly, but they were full of raw emotions. Many of Meera's verses abound with references to her ill-treatment by her husband, the Rana of Mewar, her mother-in-law, and her sister–in–law. She seems to have left behind a minor sect called Meera Bais in the medieval period.

3.2.2 Devadasi System

The Devadasi system was prevalent among the Hindus during the medieval period. It meant that beautiful unmarried girls were dedicated to gods in temples where they passed their lives as maidservants of said gods. Thus, they were nothing but the slave girls of gods. It was a common and well-established practice in medieval South India, where it survived until recent times. It was a social injustice to women and led to corruption in temples. Many inscriptions and charters showed donations to temples specifically for Devadasis. To cite an example, A general named Mahadeva, under the reign of Vikramaditya VI Chalukya, founded a temple in memory of his late mother, with quarters for the Devdasis. Devdasis were exploited by the more affluent class. During the reign of late Chola and Vijayanagar, periods of medieval south India occupied an important position: they owned property, moved about freely, and even enjoyed the privilege of a direct audience with the king.

In general, we can say that women suffered in all extents during the medieval period. They did not command respect in society and had no independent existence. In relation to the ancient period, gender inequality became more comprehensive and severe during the medieval period.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 3.4

1. Who was the first female monarch of the Delhi Sultanate?
2. Discuss the concept of 'Bhakti'.
3. Which God is Meera Bai associated with?
4. Describe the contribution of Guru Nanak for women's equality.
5. Is the Devadasi system still in practice?

WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

Ancient Period

- Ancient religious and semi-religious literature and the ancient Indian attitude to women were ambivalent. She was treated as a goddess, a saint, and a slave.
- In the pre-historic period, women had a strong and respectable position.
- During the early Vedic period, women enjoyed a relatively higher position. They could receive education and choose their life partners. Evil practices such as Sati, child marriage or the prohibition on widow marriage did not exist. They enjoyed high respect for playing the roles of daughter, wife, and mother in the early Vedic age.

- During the later Vedic phase, a gradual decline in women's status took place. The birth of sons was preferred over the birth of a daughter. The family lineage was traced through the male line. Women began to be confined to household activities.
- The great epics of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana were compiled during the later Vedic period. These two epics have strongly influenced Indian society and played a more significant role in the evolution of Hindu culture and the attitude towards women in general.
- The later Vedic texts like the Smritis, Dharma shastras and Puranas laid down the various codes of conduct, resulting in the deterioration of women's status. This period witnessed the social exclusion of women from economic and religious spheres.
- In the post-Vedic period, the condition of women became worse due to the rigidity of the caste system, based on the ideas of purity and pollution.
- Jainism and Buddhism advocated fair treatment of women.

Medieval Period

- The period of the medieval history of India starts roughly from the 11th Century up to the 18th Century. Women did not command respect in society and had no independent existence.
- There are also several capable and intelligent women such as Sultana Razziyya of the Delhi Sultanate and many women in the Mughal period, such as Nur Jahan, Nur Jahan's mother Asmat Begum,Jija Bai (mother of Shivaji) and Tara Bai (wife of Raja Ram) who influenced the politics of their times.
- The Bhakti movement in Hinduism emerged in the medieval age, which emphasized Bhakti as a means to attain salvation and advocated for the liberation of women.
- The Devadasi system was another social evil practices prevalent among the Hindus during the medieval period.

TERMINAL EXERCISE

1. Explain how women are given choice in terms of marriage and choosing life partner during early vedic age
2. Identify the leading female intellectuals during early vedic age and their contribution.
3. Evaluate how women are positioned in terms of economic status during early vedic age?
4. Discuss the system of 'Sati' during the period of 'Epics'.
5. Comment on the overall status of women during the era of Buddhism and Jainism.

6. Describe the concept of Purdah during the medieval period.
7. Elaborate role of the Bhakti, or devotional movement in women's life.

ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

3.1

1. women enjoyed equal status and held a very honourable position in society. The deities of the Indus Valley people were predominantly "mother goddesses", and they exhibit a prevalence of a matrilineal system. It shows the strong and highly respectable position of women in the Indus valley.
2. Though the birth of sons was preferred and welcome, the birth of daughters was not condemned and frowned upon. The birth of a girl child was not considered a liability. No cases of infanticide were reported.
3. a childless widow could cohabit with her brother-in-law until the birth of a son. This practice was known as the 'Niyoga system'

3.2.

1. 1000 BC to 600 BC.
2. Smiritis, Dharmashatras and Puranas.
3. No marriages outside the gotra were allowed. Monogamous marriages were preferred. Women had to stay with their husbands at their place after marriage.
4. Mahabharata and Ramayana.

3.3

1. Protest.
2. Mahavira.
3. Women were permitted to become 'Sanyasis' and had their Sangha called 'the Bhikkhuni Sangha", which allowed them to be activated in public life
4. a potter woman from the town of Sravasti owned one hundred potter wheels, which shows women's economic freedom during that time

3.4

1. Sultana Razziyya.
2. It means devotion to attain salvation.
3. Lord Krishna.
4. Guru Nanak advocated for women's equality in various socio-economic, religious, political, educational, and cultural fields
5. No.

4

GENDER IN HISTORY: COLONIAL PERIOD

This lesson deals with the gender and social reforms movement during the colonial period. For a student of Gender Studies in India, it is essential to know the history of the renaissance and social reform movements. This period is vital as it deals with social practices such as Sati Pratha, caste-based discrimination, widow remarriage and education of women. It would be interesting to look at these reforms from the women's vantage point and link gender roles and ideas to their impact on the renaissance and socio-religious reform movements. Social reform generally refers to society transforming society from its current stage to another stage. From various social practices and superstitions, resulting in turmoil to an egalitarian, fair and just society as previous practices are abolished.

The Indian society had some barbaric social practices, like, Sati Pratha and child marriage etc., since the late Vedic period that reached its peak during the colonial period. However, every country in its history has had numerous bright individuals who lived and worked for the progress and upliftment of the downtrodden people in society. Due to their effort, it became possible to abolish several social evils. In its long history, India is fortunate enough to have many extraordinary human beings devoted all their lives to society's betterment. They include Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi, Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar, Jyotiba Phule, Anne Besant, Mother Teresa, Vinoba Bhave and many more. However, the reformers believed that the social practices derived their strength from religion, so they challenged their religious dogmas and beliefs, which had made the life of people difficult. They were sure that no social reform could be made in India without religious reforms.

In the initial years, the Britishers were mainly concerned with consolidating their empire in India, protecting the British people's interests and emphasising the reorganisation of administration and regulation of the economy. Their priority was to promote and protect British trade and industry and not to take an interest in Indian social reforms and inhumane practices. Moreover, they thought it would be wise not to impede the religious and socio-cultural life of Indians because these two issues were susceptible and emotionally attached to the Indian people.

OUTCOMES

After studying this lesson, learner:

- analyses the social reform movements from the point of view of gender
- describes the participation of both men and women in the freedom struggle

4.1 STATUS OF WOMEN DURING THE BRITISH RULE

During British Rule, the Indian social structure transformed due to the changing socio-economic and cultural relationships. Though the position of women remained the same, some progressive legislation, namely the Sati Prohibition Act of 1829, Widow Remarriage Act of 1856 and the Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1929, were enacted to eliminate social evils like Sati, child marriage and introduce the system of widow remarriage. The social reformer Raja Ram Mohan Roy led a struggle against eradicating the 'Sati Pratha'. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar played an essential role in promoting women's education and widow remarriage.

Jyotiba Phule established the first Dalit School for girls in the present state of Maharashtra. Many women reformers like Pandita Ramabai fought to emancipate women from various societal obstacles. In 1931, the Karachi Session of the Indian National Congress issued a declaration on the Fundamental Rights of citizenship in India, ensuring women's equality. Many women actively participated in the freedom struggle in the pre-independence era of the twentieth century. Women like Sarojini Naidu, Bhikaji Cama, Dr Annie Besant, Vijayalakshmi Pandit, Aruna Asaf Ali, and Sucheta Kriplani played an important India's freedom struggle. During the British period, they witnessed the rise of social reform movements for women's liberation that resulted in the passing of various legislative measures. Even though it did not have a more considerable impact on improving women's condition, it controlled and reduced the incidents of social evils.

Notes

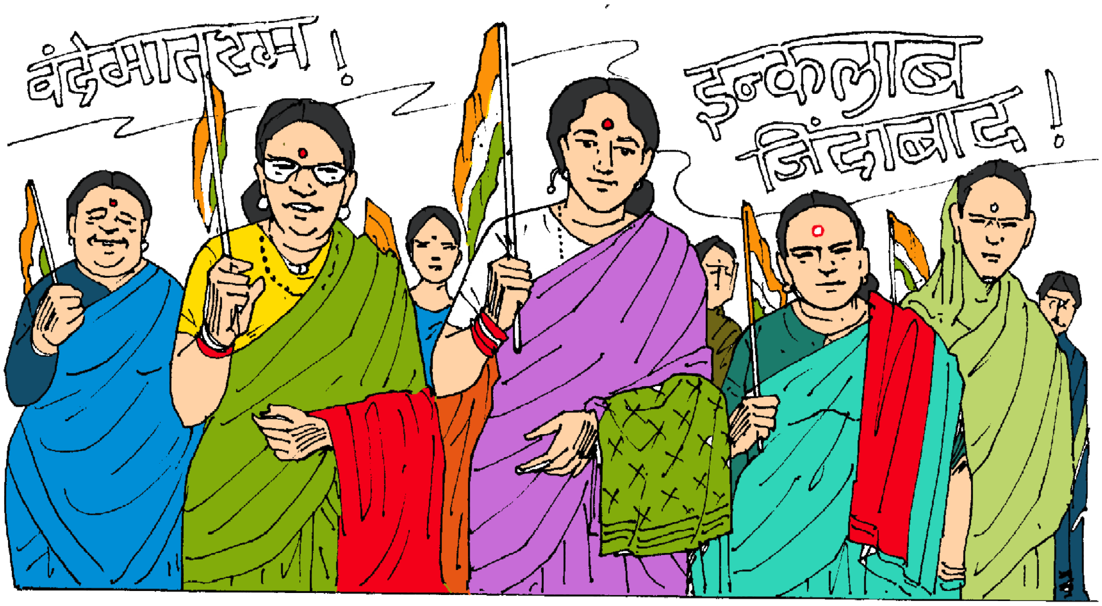


Fig 4.1 Women in the Freedom Struggle

The industrial revolution and the advancement of science and technology encouraged the British to introduce reforms to modernise India on the Western model. New ideas like humanism and rationalism replaced faith and superstition.

4.1.0 Social Reform Movements in Pre -Independent India

"The Social reformers believed in the principle of individual liberty, freedom and equality of all human beings irrespective of sex, colour, race, caste or religion."

In 19th Century India, they witnessed a strong wave of reform activities in religion and society. The educated young Indians tried to end the evils and abuses in religion and society. Western ideas of reason, equality, liberty, and humanity inspired them. They tried to remove the defects in their culture.

They wanted to revive the glory of Indian culture. Hence we call the socio-religious reform movement of 19th century India the Indian Renaissance movement. Raja Rammohan Roy was the pioneer of this movement.

The colonial period saw the rise of social reform movements which took up the issue of gender inequality. As a result, the British government passed certain laws that removed the barriers to women's emancipation. Though widespread changes could not occur, the stage was set for launching a struggle to create a gender-just society.

4.1.1 The Renaissance

Indian renaissance marked the beginning of a new era of socio-spiritual consciousness started by the reformers, which witnessed the spontaneous participation of native intellectuals. The

territory of Bengal was regarded as the cardinal to this Indian renaissance context, beginning with writers, politicians, historians, freedom fighters and religious saints.

The religious reformers and various organisations played an integral part in ushering Indian renaissance, though they also functioned at regional levels. Brahmo Samaj was a society formed by the ideas of developing a universal religion whose ideology, to a large extent, was derived from the Isa Upanishad, a monotheistic Hindu scripture. Ideas behind Raja Ram Mohan Roy's Brahmo Movement included abolishing the caste system, dowry, and Sati Pratha and improving the educational system. The leaders of the Indian Renaissance were Raja Mohan Roy, Debendranath Tagore, Keshav Chandra Sen, M.G Ranade, Atmaram Pandurangan, Swami Dayanand Saraswathi, and Swami Vivekananda.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy, pioneered various socio-religious reform movement of the 19th century, and after that, a social movement emerged. He was against traditional social practices and echoed his voice against the Sati system, polygamy, caste rigidity and child marriage. However, his most significant achievement was the prohibition of the "Sati Pratha", a practice in which a widow was made to immolate herself at her deceased husband's funeral. He struggled for years to get this evil legally eradicated.

Fig 4.2: Raja Ram Mohan Roy

Notes

He encouraged women's education and widow remarriage. Raja Ram Mohan Roy began to publish a journal called "Soudha Kumudi" in 1821, aimed at creating public opinion against the Sati system. As a result of his efforts, the first landmark legislation in British India was enacted. Sati system was made a criminal offence in 1829 under the leadership of Lord William Bentinck. However, a distinction was made between the voluntary and forced Sati. The religious fundamentalist and the traditionalist opposed it vehemently. Even the mother of Ram Mohan Roy participated in one of the organised demonstrations to oppose this act. We can easily determine how deeply these practices were rooted in Indian society.

4.1.2 Renaissance and its impact on women's education

Swami Vivekananda vigorously advocated for the upliftment of the masses, particularly women. They recommended that daughters should be brought up and educated just like sons. According to him, any sound national education scheme for India could ill-afford to ignore the masses and women of India. He remarked: "Ignorance is the mother of all the evils and all the misery we see. Let men and women be educated, pure and spiritually strong and educated, then alone will misery cease in the world, not before".

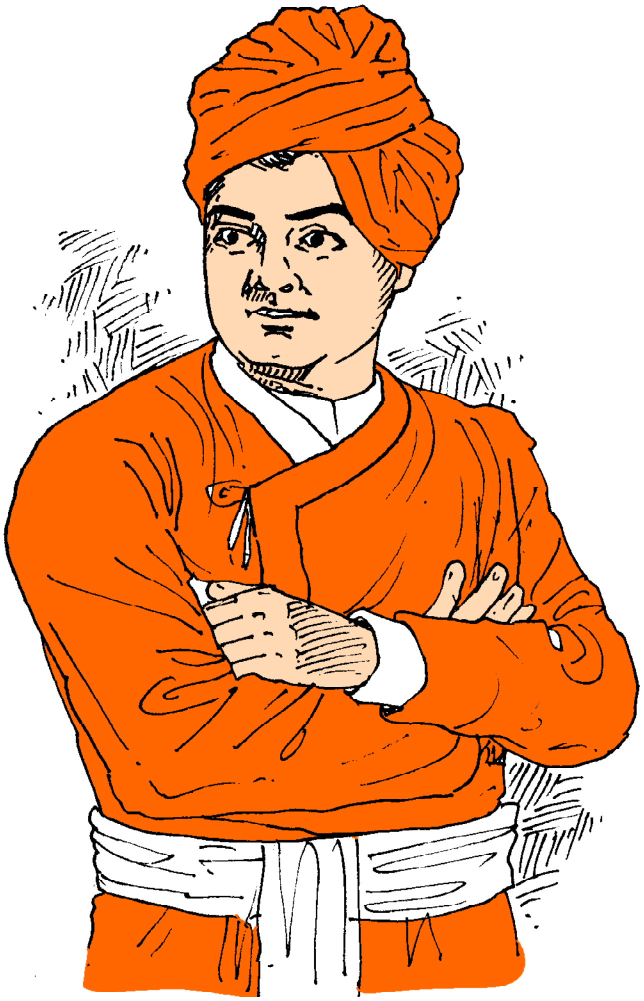


Fig 4.3: Swami Vivekananda

Swami Vivekananda believed that knowledge resided within the individual. Therefore, everyone is entitled to perfection; education is a means towards this end. So he considered education as a crucial means to regenerate the country. To sum up, the Ramakrishna Mission brought about a spiritual renaissance in the realm of Hindu religion and philosophy, resulting in a widespread national awakening, manifesting itself in a patriotic feeling of pride in the spiritual traditions of the country.

Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar is remembered as one of the pillars of the "Bengal Renaissance" for the upliftment and betterment of the status of the Indian woman. He also gave high importance to the widow remarriage concept and helped alleviate the apathy of the Indian Widow.

The widow remarriage Act was passed in 1856. Although there was no significant increase in the number of widow remarriages, the passage of this act paved the way for ending a long-withstanding oppressive custom.

Keshav Chandra Sen of the Brahmo Samaj belonged to Bengal. He advocated women's rights, promoted widow remarriage and attacked the caste system.

Tarabai Shinde was born in 1850 and was a feminist activist who vehemently protested caste and patriarchy in 19th-century India. She is popularly known for her published work known as Stri Purush Tulana.

Ramabai founded 'Arya Mahila Samaj' to serve the cause of women. She wrote a book, 'The High Caste Hindu Woman'. In 1889, Ramabai established 'Sewa Sadan'. They were preparing women as efficient citizens of society, and their objective was to make the Ashram a real home for the destitute.

Savitribai Phule and her husband stood up to fight the injustice against women at a time when people hardly identified women's grievances in India. As a result, they have been described as "one of the first-generation modern Indian feminists". Phule and her husband founded the first women's school at Bhide Wada in Pune in 1848.

Notes

Fig 4.4: Savitribai Phule

4.1.3 Caste discrimination in colonial India

The problem of Untouchability: It is essential to know the nature of the caste system in colonial India to understand the very nature of Indian society. For that, knowing Ambedkar's contribution to Law and Justice is vital. The caste-based Indian society has defined a particular code of conduct for persons belonging to every caste. Similarly, women in every caste have been ascribed a lower status than men from the same caste.

Women's plight was terrible, and they were deprived of education. They were not allowed to voice their opinion about anything. Women were considered for marriage, to produce children & for the sake of society, husband, and family & to meet irrelevant customs in India. Before independence, women were facing discrimination and injustice through various means - such as

1. Polygamy
2. Forced Illiteracy

Notes

3. Burning of widows in certain parts of the country

4. Social rejection of widows

5. Dress codes

6. Child Marriage etc.

In light of the peculiar caste-based social system that existed in India before independence, Ambedkar has proposed several remedial measures and laws to address the exploitative social system and bridge the gap between various castes or social groups in the country. According to Manu, the Hindu's religious codes divide the society into four varnas, namely, 1. Brahmins (the Priestly Class) 2. Kshatriyas (the Warrior Class) 3. Vaisyas (the Trading Class) 4. Sudras (the Servants).

In indian society, various social reformers from Gautama Buddha have worked against the caste system and untouchability. He challenged the validity of caste and Brahmanism. Many social reformers like Mahatma Jyothi Rao Phule, Sahumaharaj, Periyar, Kabeer, Santh Ravidas, Sri Narayana Guru in Andhra Pradesh Vemana and Pothuluri Vera Brahmam fought against the evils of that time.

4.1.4 Renaissance and its impact on the Abolition of Sati Pratha and Widow Remarriage

In India, a clash of ideas came between the conservatives and the radicals. However, the radicals received strong support from Raja Ram Mohan Ray and other progressive Indians.

In Indian culture, the highest ideal for a woman is virtue, purity, and allegiance to her husband. From this tradition, the custom of Sati emerged. In 'Sati Pratha', the wife immolates herself on the funeral pyre of her deceased husband or by herself with a memento as proof of her loyalty.

Among the age-old customs of India, Sati was the cruellest practice. It was a challenge for any civilised human being. The barbarous and horrifying system of Sati drew the attention of Bentinck.

The Sati system was based on the superstition that a woman would attain divinity and go to heaven by practising Sati. There were socio-economic motives behind this system. Socially, the Sati was revered by the people. Many widows preferred to practice the Sati in the hope of attaining heaven. In earlier times, it was believed that having an unmarried girl in the family was a social dishonour. So, social pressure and custom forced people to go for child marriage and marriage of young girls to old grooms. When a widow was unwilling to practice Sati, her relatives forced her into the funeral pyre. It was simply homicide.

The British government in 1829 prohibited the custom of Sati. British India declared the practice of Sati as illegal and punishable by criminal courts. Such a law revealed much about the British thought and opinion of India and its customs.

Notes

INTEXT QUESTIONS 4.1

1. In which year was 'Sati-Pratha' abolished
   - (a) 1829
   - (b) 1833
   - (c) 1964
   - (d) 1875
2. Who was instrumental in setting the widow remarriage bill passed?
   - (a) Raja ram Mohan Roy
   - (b) Swami Vivekanand
   - (c) Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar
   - (d) Keshav Chandra Sen
3. Who had founded Arya Mahila Samaj?
   - (a) Tarabai Shinde
   - (b) Ramabai
   - (c) Savitribai Phule
   - (d) Jyotibha Phule
4. Explain the meaning of Sati Pratha.

4.2 RELIGIOUS ORGANISATIONS THAT LED SOCIAL REFORMS

4.2.1 Arya Samaj

Arya Samaj was a powerful religious movement in India during the nineteenth century. The movement was led by Swami Dayanand Saraswati, who started it in 1875. Arya Samaj had similarities with the Brahmo Samaj in its ideology and mode of operations. Dayanand Saraswati was a Sanyasi (renouncer) who believed in the flawless authority of the Vedas. He advocated the doctrine of Karma and reincarnation. He also emphasised the ideals of Brahmacharya (chastity) and Sanyaas. He founded the Arya Samaj to propagate his ideas among the common people. The Arya Samaj upholds the sanctity of the cow, Samskaras, oblations to fire and social reform, including women's education. The main objective of Arya Samaj was to purify

Notes

Hinduism and save it from degenerating state. Although there was no central organisation for Arya Samaj, each Samaj operated independently in different parts of India. In 1883, soon after the death of Swami Dayanand Saraswati, the members of Arya Samaj took the responsibility to spread his ideas. They started establishing more Arya Samaj centres in different parts of India. They established schools and other institutions to spread the ideas, out of which the Dayananda Anglo-Vedic Trust and Management Society were the most prominent.

The Arya Samaj supported women's education and established a girls` school named the 'Arya Kanya Pathshala' to provide education safe from missionary influence. They also founded the Kanya Ashram, or women's hostel. They further established the Kanya Mahavidyalaya on 14th June 1896, to provide higher education to women. This institution was established with inspiration from the success of Kanya Pathshala. Besides educating the women, the Aryas also actively supported the movement for widow remarriage. They launched societies to support such marriages and put these ideals into practice. The Arya Samaj established itself as one of the significant acculturative movements with its purified Vedic Hinduism. The leadership of the Samaj mostly came from the educated Hindus of the upper castes, and the Arya Samaj did adopt an incredible organisational structure and parliamentary procedures. Both the wings of Arya Samaj created various institutions; offered new forms of worship; introduced proselytism, including paid missionaries, a conversion ritual; and reduced their teachings to a fundamental creed. The Arya Samaj mainly focused on the energies and wealth of its members for the welfare of society. The ideals of the Samaj were put into action rather than only preached.

4.2.2. Prarthana Samaj

K.C.Sen and Dr Atmaram Pandurang founded Prarthana Samaj, a Community wedded to prayerful worship of One True God. Prarthana Samaj aimed at social reforms. They condemned the caste system and preached equality of man. For the upliftment of women, they wanted to impart higher education to women; further, they emphasised the principle of increasing the age of marriage for both boys and girls. They also advocated widow remarriage. R. G. Bhandarkar, Mahadev Govinda Ranade and N. G. Chandravarkar were the prominent leaders of the Prarthana Samaj.

4.2.3 Theosophical society

The Theosophical Society was inspired by the philosophy and mysticism inherent in Hinduism. It came into being through the efforts of the celebrated Russian-born occultist, H.P. Blavatsky and her American colleagues, B.S. Olcott, W.Q. Judge and thirteen others who established the society in New York on 17th November 1875. The main motives of the theosophical society were to work for the brotherhood of humanity without any discrimination. They declared that they were the disciple of an Indian Mahatma, a `jivanmukta`, which refers to a liberated soul who was dwelling in the Himalayas. In 1882 they chose Madras as their headquarter,

which later became an important pilgrimage centre and a "holy shrine" for all followers. The arrival of Annie Beasant in India not only added to the ongoing freedom struggle but also encouraged more and more women to come out in public and participate in the freedom struggle.

Function adopted by Theosophical Society

- To form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity without discrimination of race, colour, or creed.
- To promote the study of Aryan and other Scriptures of the world's religion and sciences and to vindicate the importance of old Asiatic literature, namely, of the Buddhist, Brahmanical, and Zoroastrian philosophies.
- To inspect the hidden mysteries of nature and man's supernatural and spiritual powers.

Theosophists have promoted harmony, understanding and mutual respect among the religions. Much of theosophical lecture and literature was concerned with the comparative study of religions, tracing their essential unity and reverentially analysing their teachings. There was much cooperation between these offshoots of the theosophical movement, which was voiced through the monthly journal Theosophists Reunite. It is published in California.

4.2.4 Muslim League

The history of the Muslim League goes back to 1886 when Sir Syed Ahmad Khan established the All-Indian Muhammadan Educational Conferences to uplift Indian Muslims. In 1901, Muslim elites felt the need for a national-level political party for Muslim communities. The meeting held at Lucknow in September 1906 with representatives participation from all over India was the first stage of its formation. It was formally proposed by Nawab Salimullah Khan and supported by Hakim Ajmal Khan, Maulana Muhammed Ali Jauhar, Zafar Ali Khan and others. The Founding meeting was hosted by Nawab Sir Khwaja Salimullah and attended by three thousand delegates. Ameer Ali and Sir Mian Muhammad Shafi were the founding fathers who attended this meeting. The League's constitution was framed in 1907 in Karachi. The objective of the Muslim League was to protect the political and other rights of Indian Muslims.

The relations between Muslim League and Indian National Congress were good, but the relationships strained in 1922 as communalism grew, forcing each side to distance itself from the other.

Impact of reform movements

The reform movements played an important role by setting up a strong background for liberation. Some women reformers like Pandita Ramabai in western India, Sister Subhlakshmi in Madras and Rokeya Sukhawat Hossain in Bengal played significant roles. Child marriage restraint act

Notes

was passed in 1929, by which the minimum age of marriage for girls was fixed at 14. This was also known as Sarda Act. Sati Pratha was also banned. Education for women was encouraged and promoted. Women also came out to participate in the freedom movement.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 4.2

1. The members of the Theosophical Society were the disciple of which Indian Mahatma?

   a) Swami Vivekananda

   b) Jivanmukta

   c) Dayanand Saraswati

   d) Mahatma Gandhi

2. In which year was the Theosophical Society established?

   a) 1875

   b) 1880

   c) 1874

   d) 1880

3. Who was the founder of Arya Samaj?

   a) Vivekananda

   b) Swami Dayanand

   c) Jivanmukta

   d) Anni Beasant

4. Who was appointed the first "All India Muslim League" president?

   a) Ameer Ali

   b) Sir Agha Khan III

   c) Nawab Sir Khwaja Salimullah

   d) Sir Mian Muhammad Shafi

Notes

5. In which year were the relations between Muslim League and Indian National Congress became strained?

   a) 1920

   b) 1919

   c) 1924

   d) 1922

6. When did Sir Syed Ahmad Khan establish the All-Indian Muhammadan Educational Conference?

   a) 1880

   b) 1886

   c) 1887

   d) 1882

7. Who was the founder of Brahmo Samaj?

   a) Raja Rammohan Roy

   b) Aurobindo Gosh

   c) Vivekananda

   d) Dayanand Saraswati

8. In which year did Lord William Bentinck abolish the Sati system by passing an Act?

   a) 1831

   b) 1829

   c) 1833

   d) 1828

9. Write the aims of Theosophical Society.

10. Describe the important reform activities of Arya Samaj.

4.3. INDIAN FREEDOM STRUGGLE AND PARTICIPATION OF THE WOMEN

During the freedom struggle, the participation of women was very active, right from the

Notes

Satyagraha movement to the Quit India movement. The participation of women was their involvement in the activities of the Indian National Congress. It was in 1890 that two women, namely, Swarana Kumari Ghoshal, a woman novelist and Kadambari Ganguly, the first woman graduate of the British Empire, went to attend the Indian National Congress meetings as a delegation of women. Sarojini Naidu, better known as the `Nightingale of India`, also actively participated in the freedom struggle.

Women were not far behind their male counterparts in the freedom movement. Women joined men to protest against the British rulers by boycotting foreign goods and resolving to buy only those goods produced in the territory of India.

Women of educated and liberal families and those from rural areas actively joined the Non-Cooperation Movements. Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, Sucheta Kripalani, Sarla Devi Chaudhurani, Muthulaksmi Reddy, Susheela Nair, and Aruna Asaf Ali are some of the women freedom fighters who participated in the non-violent movement.

At the time of the Dandi March, Indian National Congress led by Gandhi did not choose a single woman for the march. It was later, Sarojini Naidu defied and joined in the march at Dandi at the final stage, and she was the first woman to be arrested in that movement. Soon after the arrest of Naidu, thousands of women joined the salt Satyagraha.

Kumudini Mitra had organised a group of educated Brahmin women who liaisoned with the revolutionaries in hidings. In December 1931, Shanti Ghose and Suniti Chowdhuri shot a district Magistrate who used to harass the people. Mina Das had attempted to shoot the governor of Bengal, Stanley Jackson.

4.4 THE MODERN PERIOD

The modern period of Indian history can be broadly classified into the British period (1800-1947) and the post-independence period. British colonialism rooted in the soil of India after the establishment of the East India Trading Company in 1600 A.D. Initially, under the regime of the East India Company, no efforts were made to address the issues of caste inequality, gender inequality and the various forms of social oppressions. Thus, Indian society was afflicted with social evils such as sati, oppression of widows, lack of female education and child marriages like in earlier periods. With the advent of the 19th century, the British undertook an initiative to eradicate social evils with the cooperation and support of progressive sections of Indian society.

4.4.1 Status of Women in Post-Independent India

There was a sea of change concerning the role and status of women after two decades of independence. This happened due to the constitutional safeguards against discrimination against

women, consequently strengthening the dignity and status of women. Besides, the state and central governments instituted various measures for women's empowerment, respectively. Further, various departments, commissions and a separate ministry examined women's affairs. In addition to this, gender budgeting was introduced for the effective implementation of all welfare measures for women.

As a result, there is an increase in the enrolment ratio of women in school and higher education levels, facilitating a surge of women's workforce in different walks of life. They are excelling in every newfound opportunity which comes their way. Women have achieved name and fame in science and technology, defence, sports, literature, music, dance and many more. They now perform the traditional roles of a daughter, wife or mother and effectively assume different occupational roles. However, despite tremendous achievements, women still face challenges on personal and professional fronts. Examples of such epidemic challenges include the gender pay gap, female infanticide, and the ongoing social evil of eve-teasing.

Fig 4.5: Women at modern occupation

Female issues are no longer about the backward aspects of tradition like Sati, child marriage or the ill-treatment of widows. From 1970 onwards, women have been waging a struggle against contemporary issues like rape, domestic violence, sexual harassment in the workplace, acid attacks, honour killing and dowry murders. The female empowerment movements are in full swing to fight for or defend the rights of women.

Despite progressive or liberal measures, one can find that prejudice, bias and stereotypes persist in the mindset of men against women. In the face of the declining sex ratio, a new scheme called "Beti Bachao; Beti Padhao" (save the girl child; educate the girl child) was introduced in 2015 by the central government to generate awareness about the importance of the girl child. There are many such welfare schemes were introduced for women empowerment:

Schemes	Launch Year	Objectives
Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme	2015	● To prevent gender-biased sex selective elimination ● To ensure survival & protection of the girl child ● To ensure education and participation of the girl child
Ujjawala	2016	● To prevent the trafficking of women and children for commercial sexual exploitation. ● To facilitate the rescue of victims from the place of their exploitation and place them in safe custody. ● To provide rehabilitation services with both immediate and long-term to the victims by providing basic amenities/needs such as shelter, food, clothing, medical treatment including counseling, legal aid and guidance, and vocational training.
Nari Shakti Puraskar	2016	● To strengthen the place of women in society. ● To facilitate institutions that work towards the progress and development of women in society.
Mahila Shakti Kendras (MSK)	2017	● To create an environment for women where they have access to healthcare, quality, education, guidance, employment, etc. ● To facilitate these opportunities at the block and district level in the country.
Mahila E-Haat	2016	● To facilitate entrepreneurship opportunities online for women. ● To educate women on various aspects of online selling and helping them establish their venture.
MUDRA Yojana (Micro Units Development and Refinance agency Ltd)	2015	● To encourage entrepreneurship among the underprivileged sections of the society. ● To provide loans upto Rs. 10 lakh are provided to women entrepreneurs, without any collateral.

Women empowerment is not the only issue in India; there are also regional and class differences. Despite stringent legal measures against the atrocities against women, there is a rise in crime

against women, indicating the persistence of society's patriarchal nature. Of course, in comparison with the past, there is an improved situation regarding the status of women, but they still have to go a long way. The fight for gender equality is not yet over; it is an ongoing struggle.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 4.3

1. Who was the first women graduate of the British Empire?

   (a) Swarna Kumari Ghosal

   (b) Kadambari Ganguly

   (c) Sarojini Naidu

   (d) Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur

2. Who had joined the Dandi March after defying congress?

   (a) Sarojini Naidu

   (b) Aruna Asaf Ali

   (c) Sucheta kriplani

   (d) Susheela Nair

3. Who is known as the 'Nightingale of India'?

   (a) Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur

   (b) Sucheta Kriplani

   (c) Sarojini Naidu

   (d) Aruna Asaf Ali

4. Describe briefly the importance of "Beti Bachao; Beti Padhao" scheme.

5. Explain the provisions for women under 'Mudra' scheme.

WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

The status of women during British Rule remained the same, though many legislations and social reform movements were undertaken to fight against the prevailing social evils.

Notes

The socio-religious reform movement of 19th century India was known as the Indian Renaissance movement and was pioneered by Raja Rammohan Roy.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy started the Brahmo Movement, which focused on abolishing the caste system, dowry, and Sati Pratha and improving the educational system. He encouraged women's education and widow remarriage. His efforts made the Sati system a criminal offence in 1829 (Bengal Sati Regulation 1829).

Swami Vivekananda started the Ramakrishna mission, which focused on women's education and spiritual renaissance in Hindu religion and philosophy.

Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar professed widow remarriage and helped alleviate apathy towards them, resulting in the passing of The Widow Remarriage Act in 1856.

Tarabai Shinde, Ramabai, and Savitribai Phule were notable women during that period and are described as "one of the first-generation modern Indian feminists" who fought against the injustices done to women.

The caste system made women even more vulnerable as women in every caste were ascribed a lower status than the man belonging to the same caste.

One of the major social evils practised in Indian society at that time was Sati, the custom in which a wife immolates herself on the funeral pyre of her deceased husband or by herself with a memento as proof of her loyalty. When a widow was unwilling to practice Sati, her relatives forced her on the funeral pyre. It was simply homicide. The British government in 1829 prohibited the custom of Sati. British India declared the practice of Sati as illegal and punishable by criminal courts.

These social reform movements were also supported by many new religious organisations formed to reorient the Indian society that sanctioned injustices done to women. Arya Samaj, started by Swami Dayanand Saraswati, worked on promoting women's education and widow remarriage. Prarthana Samaj condemned the caste system and preached equality of man. For the upliftment of women, they propagated to impart higher education to women and emphasised increasing the age of marriage for both boys and girls. The Theosophical society focused on working for humanity's brotherhood without any discrimination. Muslim League was started to protect the political and other rights of Indian Muslims.

During the freedom struggle, the participation of women was very active, right from the Satyagraha movement to the Quit India movement.

The modern period of Indian history can be broadly classified into the British period (1800-1947) and the post-independence period. During the British period, there were no efforts to address the issues of caste inequality, gender inequality, and various forms of social oppression.

However, after about 200 years, they started bringing legislation to ban many social evils.

After two decades of independence, the constitutional safeguards against discrimination against women strengthened the dignity and status of women. Various measures for the empowerment of women were instituted by the state and central governments, respectively. There were various departments, commissions, and a separate ministry to look into the affairs of women.

From 1970 onwards, women have struggled against contemporary issues like rape, domestic violence, sexual harassment in the workplace, acid attacks, honour killing, and dowry murders.

TERMINAL EXERCISE

1. Highlight any two civil evils prevailing in society during the medieval period.
2. Who banned Sati Pratha in India?
3. List the laws framed during the medieval period to stop social evils.
4. Why had the social status of women been inferior during the medieval period?
5. Describe the social reforms undertaken by the following social reformers.

    (i) Swami Dayanand

    (ii) Ishwar Chand Vidyasagar

    (iii) Rama Bai

    (iv) Jyotiba Phule

6. Describe the contribution of the following organisations in the field of social reforms.

    (i) Arya Samaj

    (ii) Theosophical society

    (iii) Prarthana Samaj

ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

4.1

1. (a) 1829
2. (c) Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar

3. (b) Ramabai

4. The custom in which a wife immolates herself on the funeral pyre of her deceased husband as proof of her loyalty.

4.2

1. b) Jivanmukta
2. a) 1875
3. b) Swami Dayanand
4. c) Nawab Sir Khwaja Salimullah
5. d) 1922
6. b) 1886
7. a) Raja Rammohan Roy
8. b) 1829
9. Function adopted by Theosophical Society

   a. To form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity without discrimination of race, colour, or creed.

   b. To promote the study of Aryan and other Scriptures of the world's religion and sciences and to vindicate the importance of old Asiatic literature, namely, of the Buddhist, Brahmanical, and Zoroastrian philosophies.

   c. Inspect the hidden mysteries of nature and man's supernatural and spiritual powers.

10. The Arya Samaj were supporters of women's education and had established a girls` school, named the 'Arya Kanya Pathshala', to provide education that is safe from missionary influence. They also founded the Kanya Ashram, or women's hostel. They further established the Kanya Mahavidyalaya on 14th June 1896, to provide higher education to women. This institution was established with inspiration from the success of Kanya Pathshala. Besides educating the women, the Aryas also actively supported the movement for widow remarriage. They launched societies to support such marriages and put these ideals into practice. The Arya Samaj established itself as one of the significant acculturative movements with its purified Vedic Hinduism.

Notes

4.3

1. b) Kadambari Ganguly
2. a) Sarojini Naidu
3. c) Sarojini Naidu
4. To generate awareness about the importance of the girl child
5. Provision of loans upto Rs. 10 lakh are provided to women entrepreneurs, without any collateral

MODULE -2

Gender Issues and Social Change

This module familiarizes the learners about the various social institutions like marriage, family and kinship and also helps them to understand the gender differentials prevailing in these institutions. The module also enables the learners to understand various indicators of gender inequality and manifestation of gender inequality in different socio-economic contexts such as inequality in education, inequality in healthcare, discrimination at workplace, dowry, domestic violence and many others. It also highlights the status of women in the domain of employment and economy.

The module is designed to discuss the impact of environmental degradation on human life in general and women in particular and various concerns related to women's health and quality of life due to environmental challenges. It also highlights the role played by humans in conserving natural resources and biodiversity and various environmental movements in India

5. Marriage Kinship and Family

6. Inequalities of Gender

7. Gender and Economy

8. Gender and Environment

5

MARRIAGE, FAMILY AND KINSHIP

Marriage and family have been important social institutions since immemorial and have helped maintain order, stability and equilibrium in human society. Family is the primary agency of socialisation, and value systems are inculcated within the family context. All the gender roles are socialised within the family. Marriage is another social institution where the relationship between a man and a woman is socially approved. In short, marriage is the social recognition of the practice by which men and women live together as husband and wife to raise a family. According to Paul B. Horton and Chester L. Hunt, "it is the approved social pattern whereby two or more persons establish a family". Children born out of marriage are considered the legitimate offsprings of the married couple. This legitimacy is considered important during issues of inheritance and succession. Thus, marriage is not only confined to sexual gratification but has great cultural significance in maintaining the institution of the family. It is believed to be a universal social institution in India. However, Kinship bonds are created due to the emergence of different kinds of relationships between human beings and are instrumental in allocating various gender roles. In this lesson, you will learn about the various social institutions like marriage, family and kinship and also understand the gender differentials prevailing in these institutions.

OUTCOMES

After studying this lesson, learner:

- understands the concept of marriage, family and kinship;
- discusses different forms of family and household in India;
- explains kinship, and its different types
- explains the impact of globalisation on Indian families.
- recognises the unequal division of labour in the family;

Notes

- provides suggestions for promoting just and equitable distribution of resources.
- practices gender equality and empowerment of women by ensuring dignity at work, freedom and protection of well-being.

5.1 CONCEPT OF MARRIAGE, FAMILY AND KINSHIP

Marriage is a social institution in India. It is the social recognition of the practice by which men and women live together per socially sanctioned norms and practices. Marriage, as an institution, plays a prominent role in the procreation and upbringing of children. In India, Hindu marriage is considered a sacred bond. Its aim is not only to secure sexual gratification but, as K.M. Kapadia says, 'Hindu marriage is a socially approved union of men and women aiming at dharma procreation, sexual pleasure and observance of certain obligations. Ancient Hindu texts point out three main aims of marriage, which include; dharma (fulfilment of religious duties considered as the highest aim of marriage), Praja (progeny) and Rati(sexual pleasure)".

Similarly, family is the basic unit of socialisation and kinship systems are often considered the organising principle to make social relationships.

5.2 FORMS OF FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD IN INDIA

Since Vedic times, the institution of family has been a part of the Indian way of life. However, the concept of family in India is not nuclear but an extended one. Sir Henry Maine coined the term joint family to describe the patrilineal type of extended family where all the male members of the family hold joint ownership rights over the family property. According to Irawati Karve, "A joint family is a group of people who live under one roof, eat food cooked on one hearth, hold property in common, participate in common worship and are related to each other as some particular type of kindred."

According to the Hindu Succession Act 1956, the word 'common' or joint property indicates that all family members have a share in the paternal property across generations. Therefore, such property cannot be disposed of without the coparceners' consent.

5.2.1 Structural Aspects of Joint Family

In a joint family structure, the husband's relationship with his wife, unmarried sister and children have specific positions. A joint family may consist of related members linearly, collaterally or both. The couples may be related lineally (generally in a father-son relationship or sometimes in a father-daughter relationship) or (ii) collaterally (generally in a brother-brother relationship or sometimes in a brother-sister relationship).

Pauline Kolenda presents the following types of joint families based on relations between their members.

Notes

(a) **Collateral Joint Family:** It comprises two or more married couples with a sibling bond. In this type of family, a brother and his wife and another brother and his wife live together with unmarried children.

(b) **Supplemented Collateral Joint Family:** A collateral is a joint family with unmarried, divorced or widowed relatives. The relatives in a supplemented collateral family are generally the widowed mother of the married brothers, the widower father, or unmarried siblings.

(c) **Lineal Joint Family:** In this family, two couples having a lineal link (i.e. between parents and their married son or between parent and his married daughter) live under one roof.

(d) **Supplemented Lineal Joint Family:** It is a lineal joint family together with unmarried, divorced or widowed relatives who do not belong to either of the lineally linked nuclear families, for example, the father's widower brother or the son's wife's married brother or sister.

(e) **Lineal Collateral Joint Family:** In this type, three or more couples are linked linearly and collaterally. For example, there can be a family comprising of parents and their two or more married sons staying together with the unmarried children of the couple.

(f) **Supplemented Lineal-Collateral Joint Family:** This type of family is a lineal collateral joint family, including married, widowed and separated relatives who do not belong to either of the nuclear families that are linearly and collaterally linked-for example, the father's widowed sister or brother or an unmarried nephew of the father.

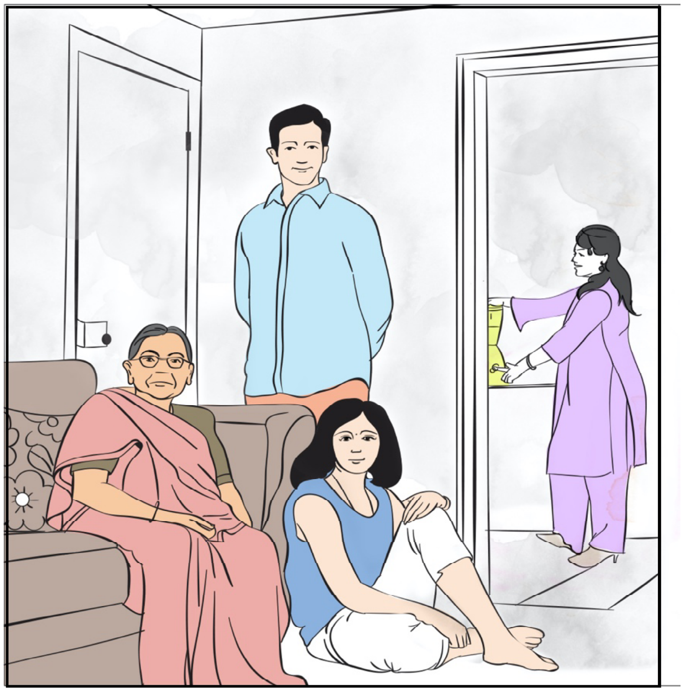


Figure 5.1. Joint Family in India

Notes

The traditional joint family has several structural features:

1. **Authoritarian Structure:** The joint family in India is traditionally based on the principle of patriarchy, where the eldest male is considered the symbol of power and authority. This power rests with the eldest male due to his age and seniority. The head of the family or patriarch takes all decisions and may or may not consult other family members. However, families based on democratic values provide all members equal decision-making rights.

2. **Familistic Organisation:** This refers to prioritising the family's interests above individual ones. This indicates that family values and goals are more important than individual goals, due to which conflicting situations may arise.

3. **The filial and fraternal relationship gets priority over the conjugal relationship.** For example, in a joint family, the relationship between father and son or of two brothers based on filial bonds is preferred over the relationship between husband and wife, based on conjugal bonds.

4. **Principle of Seniority:** The delegation of authority in a traditional joint family is based on the principle of seniority. Though the eldest male (or female) may delegate the authority to someone else, such delegation is based on the principle of seniority, which may limit the scope for the development of individualism (Ahuja,1997)

5. **Division of Labour in the Joint Family:** The division of labour within the family is generally based on sex. While men are considered to handle economic responsibilities, women have their role out of responsibilities in the domestic sphere.

5.2.2 Types of Family

There are various types of families prevalent in India based on different criteria:

Based on marriage -

1. **Monogamous Family:** This family consists of one husband and one wife. When a single husband and wife live together, they form a monogamous family. This family system restricts married couples from living with more than one partner. This type of family is considered an ideal type of family.

2. **Polygamous Family:** Polygamous family is subdivided into polygynous and polyandrous families.

   (a) **Polygynous family:** This family comprises a man with more than one wife living with their children. This family is found among specific religious communities like the Muslims and certain tribal groups in Africa, Asia and Australia.

Notes

(b) **Polyandrous family:** In this kind of family, a woman marries more than one man and may live together or with each of them separately in turns. Such families are not commonly found but are found among certain tribal communities like the Todas of Nilgiris, Nayars of Kerala and among Tibetans.

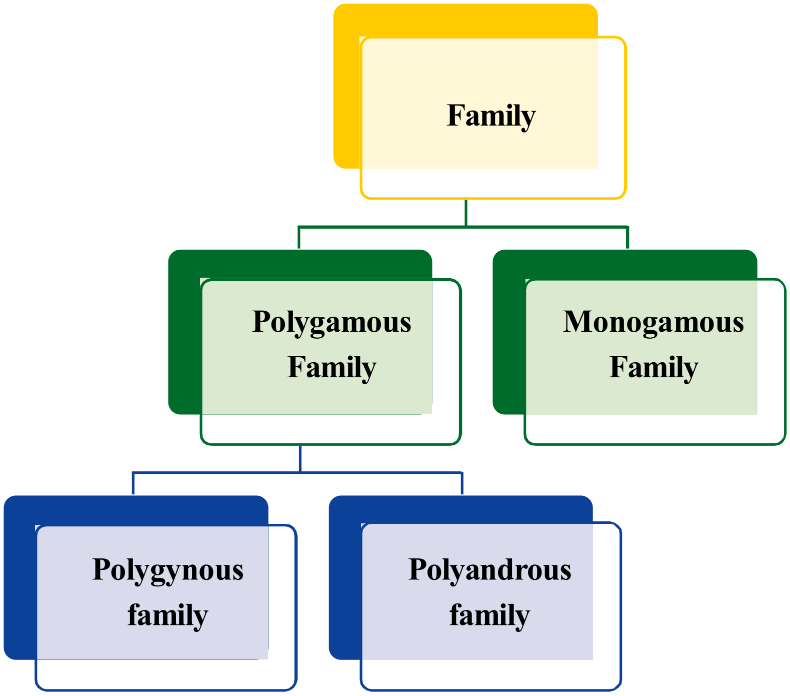


Figure 5.2: Kind of family based on marriage

Based on residence:

(a) **Patrilocal Family:** In this type of family, the married woman stays with her husband's family. This is based on patrilocal residence and is very common in India.

(b) **Matrilocal Family:** In this type of family, the husband stays in his wife's house. This kind of family is found among some communities like the Nayars of Kerala.

(c) **Avunculocal Family:** In this kind of family, the married couples live in their maternal uncle's family. Figure 5.3: Kinds of family based on residence

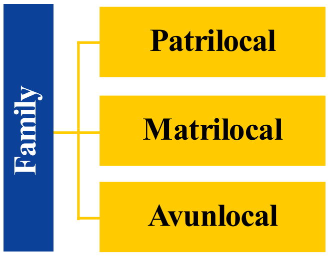


Figure 5.3: Kinds of family based on residence

Based on lineage

(a) **Patrilineal Family:** In this type of family, people belonging to their father's lineage reside as a family.

(b) **Matrilineal Family:** In this type of family, people belonging to their mother's lineage reside as a family.

Based on residence:

(a) **Patrilocal Family:** In this type of family, the married woman stays with her husband's family. This is based on patrilocal residence and is very common in India.

(b) **Matrilocal Family:** In this type of family, the husband stays in his wife's house. This kind of family is found among some communities like the Nayars of Kerala.

(c) **Avunculocal Family:** In this kind of family, the married couples live in their maternal uncle's family.-

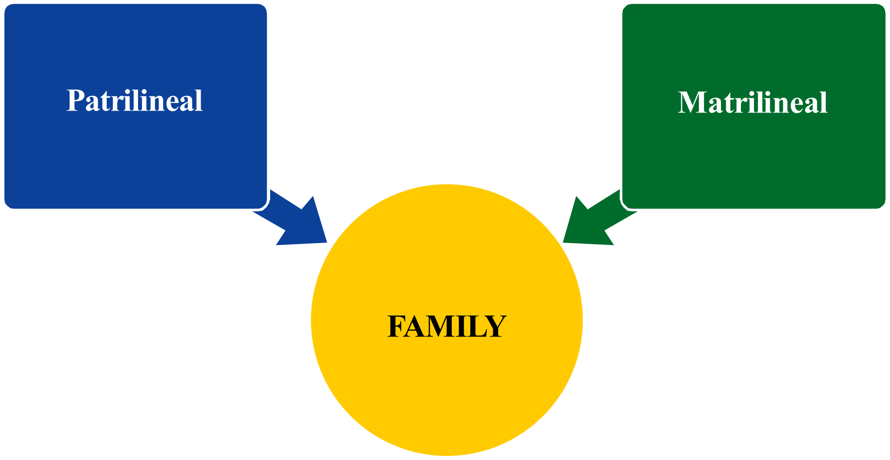


Fig 5.4: Kinds of family based on lineage

INTEXT QUESTIONS 5.1

1. Explain the concept of marriage.
2. Define Joint Family.
3. Mention the types of the family based on relations.
4. Mention the features of the joint family

Notes

5.3 KINSHIP

Kinship denotes the recognition of relatives through a blood relationship (technically called consanguinity) or marriage (called affinity). Kinship may be defined as a social relationship based on family relatedness. The kinship system may be considered the conventional system of statuses and roles that governs the behaviour of people who are related to each other through marriage or descent from a common ancestor. Kinship serves two important and related purposes:

(i) It provides a way of transmitting status and property from one generation to the next and

(ii) Establishes and maintains influential social groups.

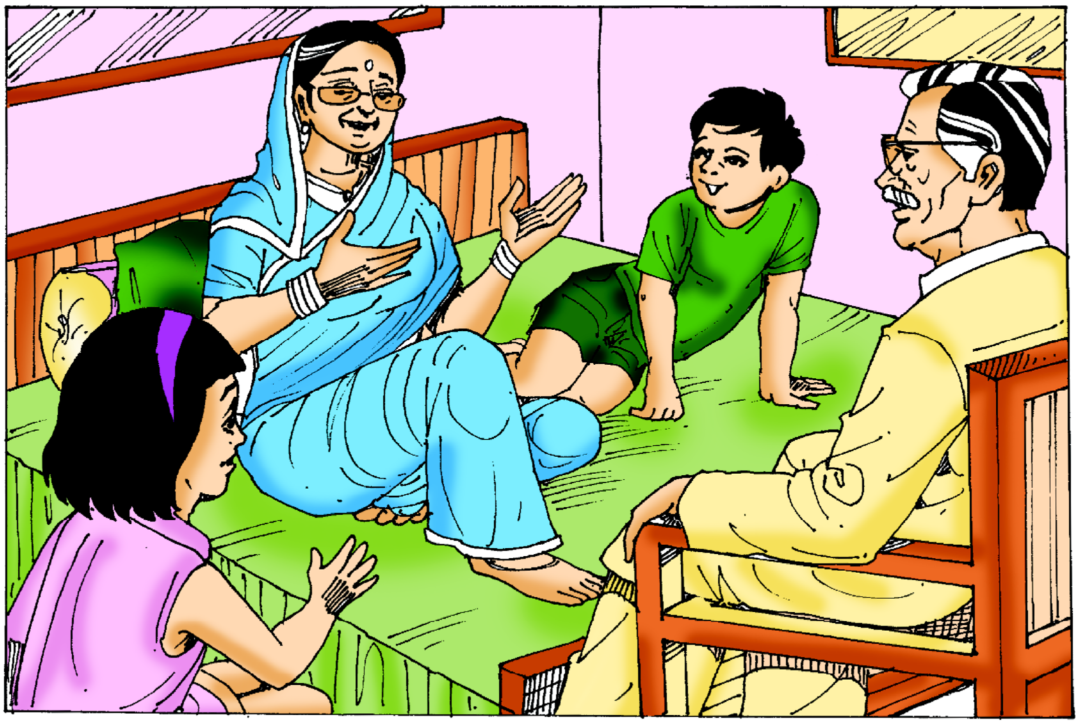


Fig 5.5 Interaction between family members

5.3.1 Types of Kinship

There are two kinds of kinship structures within the family

(i) Consanguineal Kinship: This kind of kinship bond is developed through blood relations. For example, parents and their children. Thus father, son, daughter, brother etc., are referred to as consanguineal kin.

(ii) **Affinal kinship:** A kinship bond developed through marriage is called affinal kinship. For example, relations between two families come in contact through marriage. The girl establishes relations with her husband's family members and vice versa.

Notes

INTEXT QUESTIONS 5.2

1. Explain the meaning of kinship
2. Mention the types of kinship

5.4 GLOBALISATION OF INDIAN FAMILY: GENDER PERSPECTIVE OR GLOBALISATION, GENDER ROLES AND INDIAN FAMILY

There is no doubt that the joint family system is changing, which may lead to several challenges for society. The impact of industrialisation and globalisation has transformed family relationships, including weakening family bonds. In addition, the changes in the joint family system have led to the alteration of gender roles within the household and in the larger society. The factors leading to changes in the joint family are analysed, particularly from the perspective of the disintegration of the joint family.

Economic factors: The process of social change due to industrialisation led to the mobility of individuals as there was a diversification of occupational opportunities for employment in varied spheres. This has affected the joint family system in India. In addition, the constitutional provisions in India have promoted gender equality and prohibited discrimination based on sex. Such provisions have enabled men and women to have economic freedom, thereby promoting mobility.

Educational factors: British rule in India promoted opportunities for higher education in India. All castes and communities had access to education. English education exposed the people to individualistic, liberal and humanitarian ideas which questioned traditional religious ideas and practices such as child marriage, unequal property rights to women, etc.

Legal factors: The introduction of Legislation on employment, education, marriage and the property has affected the family system in several ways. The labour legislations like the Workers Compensation Act (1923), The Minimum Wages Act (1948) etc., have helped promote social security to workers' families, thereby reducing their dependence on family members. The Hindu Gains of Learning Act of 1930 and the Hindu Succession Act (1956) were legislations for protecting the property rights of Hindus. The Hindu Marriage Act of 1955 also challenged the traditional ideas of Hindu marriage. These legislations challenged the inheritance patterns that prevailed in joint families prior to the passing of this act and the dependent position of women within the family.

Notes

Urbanisation: The process of urbanisation has also brought significant changes in the family system. It has resulted in large-scale migration. Separating family members from their residences due to migration to urban centres has affected the size and composition of families in India. Though the joint family system is disintegrating in India, it would be wrong to conclude that the traditional joint family is breaking down and the parent's or patriarch's domination is disappearing. The trend towards nuclear families in urbanised areas has not affected the conjugal system of the rural community. Therefore, it cannot be predicted that the traditional joint family in India will be completely disintegrated. K.M. Kapadia (1972) believes that "families who have migrated to cities still retain their bonds with their joint family in the village or town. Even after residentially separating themselves, they do not function as an isolated or completely independent unit as they retain their kinship orientation and joint family ethics". Though social mobility has increased, these alterations have not led to the transformation of joint families into nuclear families. However, the urban areas witnessed a new kind of joint family where members from their villages had migrated to cities. Thus, according to Singer, the industrial centre became a new area for working the joint family system.

Analysing all these factors of change in the family system, it can be said that though the traditional type of jointness (that is, jointness in residence, functioning and property) in Indian families is shifting to nuclear families based on smaller residence size, yet, the principle of functional jointness persists which retains the sentiments of the joint family for the coming years. The present Indian family is not structurally isolated because it forms an integral part of a more comprehensive system of kinship relationships. The social relationship between a member of families is based on binding obligations and emotional support with strong conjugal, filial and fraternal bonds with each other.

5.5 UNEQUAL DIVISION OF LABOUR AND RESOURCES IN FAMILY

You will find that gender norms are often expressed within the household domain and are reflected in larger social institutions. A household is a basic unit where individuals cooperate and compete for resources. The gender roles attributed to the household members are often socially constructed rather than biologically determined, which may manifest in women's access to education, employment and health.

Unequal distribution of resources

One of the most important social institutions is the household. It is a basic unit of society where people cooperate and compete for resources. Gender norms are expressed within the household, reinforced, and reflected in larger social institutions. Women have been the victims of gender bias within the household. Cultural norms and institutional community practices restrict them from receiving education in comparison to their male counterparts. For example, the girl child is socialised to have secondary status in comparison to the male children. In many

Notes

rural areas, they are deprived of higher education or even basic primary education.

Property ownership: Property ownership, specifically access to land, is of immense significance in a country like India. Concerning ownership rights, which are usually acquired through inheritance or sale /purchase, they have always been the prerogative of males. Women have been excluded and are denied access to land in the patriarchal system of India.

It is widely recognised that women's empowerment lies with women's agency, i.e. women's ability to decide goals and act upon them (Kabeer,1999). Agency is often measured in terms of women's participation in household decision-making. However, in many communities in India, the sole decision-making within the household rests with the patriarch or male head of the household. Patriarchal families have been prevalent in India; primarily, males are the sole decision-makers. Though matriarchal families exist within some communities in India, like the Khasis of North East and Todas of Nilgiris yet the extent to which the females take the decisions is a questionable issue.

5.6 ENSURING EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF RESOURCES AND DEVELOPING A PERSONAL CODE OF CONDUCT

Gender differences and gender inequality have been socially constructed within the household domain. The concept of women's empowerment is related to gender equality. This implies that empowered women must not only have equal capabilities (such as education and health) and equal access to resources and opportunities (such as land and employment), but they must also have the agency to use those rights, capabilities, resources, and opportunities to make strategic choices and decisions (as is provided through leadership, opportunities and participation in political institutions). However, these goals cannot be achieved in isolation. There should be an interplay of many institutions to overcome gender biases.

- **Role of a family:** As the primary agency of socialisation, the family needs to propagate gender equality by removing all kinds of discrimination between boys and girls. Socialisation patterns need to be gender neutral with equality of opportunity for both sexes. The recent World Development Report 2012 by the World Bank states that "To equalise voice within households, measures that increase women's control over household resources and laws that enhance the ability of women to accumulate assets, especially by strengthening their property rights, are of particular importance".

- **Role of community:** However, the ability of an Indian village woman to "bargain" with the community for a more significant share in community resources or for greater social freedom (a change in social norms) would be more limited than that of a man. For several reasons, her personal property and overall economic status, say, landed property, would be less dependent Globalisation: It is a process of increasing economies' economic and financial integration worldwide. It refers to worldwide changes across boundaries

in various spheres such as economic, cultural, technological, cultural, etc.

- **Role of State :** The state has the power to enact laws and formulate policies and programs in women's favour; to increase women's access to productive resources, employment, information, education and health; to protect from gender violence; to influence the discourse on gender relations in the media and educational institutions, etc.

5.7. PROMOTING WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT: PERSONAL FREEDOM AND SHARED DECISION MAKING

Gender gaps in human capital can be narrowed through many promotional programmes, but gender inequality can persist with an unequal capacity to exercise agency. By agency, one means an individual's capacity to make choices and transform these choices into an appropriate action plan. Women's ability to choose and act at any time reflects the earlier foundations laid in life through socialisation. Therefore, women's empowerment can be fully realised by promoting women's agency. This can be achieved through the following:

Firstly, women's economic empowerment with improvement in material conditions to exercise agency through higher incomes and greater access to services and resources. Women should have the ability to have bargaining power within the household and the ability to accumulate assets.

Secondly, expansion in women's rights for family formation and control over household resources through appropriate legal frameworks also contribute to exercising agency.

Thirdly, a change in social norms can also help in promoting agency. Norms can constrain women's agency when they prevent laws, services and incomes from benefiting women. Therefore, it is essential to address discriminatory social norms that lead to gender inequality. This can be achieved through attitudinal change and addressing institutional barriers to promote gender equality.

Policies aimed at increasing women's participation in societal institutions can be done by addressing the information problems or the underlying beliefs that women cannot make decisions. Some of the important policy initiatives can be reforming formal and informal legal frameworks, harmonising laws to provide equality to women and men, and prohibiting discriminatory and harmful practices. Others include economic support and incentives for individuals, families and communities to change behaviours and address discriminatory attitudes - e.g. support to encourage parents to invest in the education of their daughters as well as their sons and community mobilisation, awareness, and empowerment initiatives to change discriminatory attitudes, social norms and practices through, for example, media campaigns reinforcing the value of daughters.

Notes

INTEXT QUESTIONS 5.3

1. Highlight the factors which have led to the decline in a joint family?
2. Explain how a household creates an unequal division of labour?
3. Explain various institutions' roles in promoting equitable resource distribution.

WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

- Marriage and family are important social institutions that have helped maintain order and discipline.
- All gender roles are socialised within the context of family and household.
- The concept of family in India is not nuclear but an extended one. A joint family may consist of members related to each other through lineal or collateral bonds or both. The couples may be related to each other through (i) lineage (for example, father-son relationship or father-daughter relationship) or (ii) collaterally (for example, brother-brother relationship or brother-sister relationship).
- The changes in joint families have altered gender roles within the household and society.
- Kinship denotes the recognition of relatives through a blood relationship (technically called consanguinity) or marriage (called affinity). Kinship may be defined as a social relationship based on family relatedness.
- A household is a basic unit where individuals cooperate and compete for resources. The gender roles attributed to household members are often socially constructed rather than biologically determined.
- Women empowerment is understood in terms of gender equality which implies that in order to be empowered, women must not only have equal capabilities (such as education and health) and equal access to resources and opportunities(such as land and employment) but also must have the agency to use those rights, capabilities, resources, and opportunities to make strategic choices and decisions (such as is provided through leadership, opportunities and participation in political institutions)
- The family, community and state can play an important role in removing gender biases and promoting equality.

TERMINAL EXERCISE

1. Define joint family and mention the types of joint family.
2. What are the factors responsible for the disintegration of a joint family?
3. Explain how the household division of labour creates an unequal distribution of resources.
4. How can the family, community and state ensure gender equality?

GLOSSARY

1. **Monogamous Family:** When a single husband and wife live together, they form a monogamous family. In this kind of family, there is no provision to have more than one partner
2. **Industrialisation:** Industrialisation is a period of social and economic change where an agrarian society transforms into an industrial society.
3. **Globalisation:** It is a process of increasing economies' economic and financial integration worldwide. It refers to worldwide changes across boundaries in various spheres such as economic, cultural, technological, cultural, etc.
4. **Urbanisation:** Cities have grown due to industrialisation and migration from rural to urban areas.
5. **Ethics:** related to the morality of proper conduct
6. **Social norms** are customary behaviour that governs people in groups.

ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

5.1

1. Marriage is the social recognition of the practice by which men and women live together as husband and wife to raise a family.
2. Irawati Karve defines a joint family as "a group of people who live under one roof, eat food cooked at one hearth, hold property in common, participate in common worship, and are related to each other as some particular type of kindred".
3. Based on marriage family is divided into monogamous and polygamous. The basis of the residence family is divided into patrilocal, matrilocal and avunculocal and based on lineage. The family is divided into patrilineal and matrilineal.

4. The structural features of a joint family are an Authoritarian Structure, familistic organisation, conjugal relationship, principle of seniority and division of labour.

5.2

1. Kinship denotes the recognition of relatives through a blood relationship (technically called consanguinity) or marriage (called affinity).

2. Kinship is of two types (i) consanguineal and (ii) affineal.

5.3

1. The factors responsible for the disintegration of a joint family are; Economic factors, education, legal factors and urbanisation

2. Gender norms are expressed within the household, reinforced, and reflected in larger social institutions. Cultural norms and institutional community practices restrict them from receiving education compared to their male counterparts.

3. **i)** **Role of the family:** The family being the primary agency of socialisation, needs to propagate gender equality by removing all kinds of discrimination between boys and girls; Role of community: Material and social support from outside the community and family, such as from women's groups, other Non-Governmental Organizations and the State like earning opportunities, housing, legal support and (say, from women's groups) emotional (confidence building) and social support can contribute in promoting gender equality and women empowerment.

   ii) **Role of State:** The State has the power to enact laws and formulate policies and programmes in women's favour; to increase women's access to productive resources, employment, information, education and health; to protect from gender violence; to influence the discourse on gender relations in the media and educational institutions, etc.

6

INEQUALITIES OF GENDER

Gender equality is a fundamental human right. Gender-based discrimination and bias violate this basic human right, causing inequalities between men and women. Gender inequalities occur everywhere; and at every stage of life, beginning with childhood or even before birth.

While the American Anthropologist G.P. Murdock argues that social inequality between men and women is due to biological inequality, social scientists and feminists argue that social inequality is the product of social construction. The key indicators of gender inequality are education, mortality, political representation/participation and economic activity. Gender inequality exists when men (or women) enjoy a disproportionate share of valued goods such as political or economic conditions, educational status or better job opportunities.

In this lesson, you will get an understanding about various indicators of gender inequality and manifestation of gender inequality in different socio-economic contexts such as inequality in education, inequality in healthcare, discrimination at workplace, dowry, domestic violence and many others.

OUTCOMES

After studying this lesson, learner:

- explains various indicators of Gender Inequality;
- describes different forms of gender inequalities;
- analyses various ways in which gender inequality manifests in different socio-economic contexts.

6.1 INDICATORS OF GENDER INEQUALITY

The nation-states, the world over, guarantee all their citizens the right to equality. However, it was in 1995 that the United Nations Development Programme(UNDP) brought out the

Gender-related Development Index as a method for assessing gender inequality. The Gender-related Development Index (GDI) indicates the standard of living in a country developed by the United Nations (UN). GDI is one of the five indicators the United Nations Development Programme uses in its annual Human Development Report. It shows inequalities between men and women in health, knowledge, and a decent standard of living.

Gender inequality is discrimination based on sex or gender, causing one sex or gender to be routinely privileged or prioritised over another. It is measured using various indicators selected generally from the 'opportunities' or 'outcomes' framework. A few key areas of measurement of gender equality are health, education, employment, representation, and legal rights. For example, the gender indices used by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and World Bank comprise differences in life expectancy and education levels, such as enrolment, and democratic representation, such as the proportion of parliamentary seats occupied by females.

Gender discrimination can be seen in the following areas

- The sex ratio is unfavourable to women and has declined over time.
- The literacy rates are low among women than men
- The life expectancy is lower for women in India.
- The opportunities and access to decision-making institutions are unequal to men and women.
- A clear division of labour between men and women assigns different kinds of tasks to men and women. The activities with low market value are usually assigned to women.
- The share of parliamentary seats for women is in the ratio of 25 to 75 or 0.333.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 6.1

1. Mention a few Indicators of Gender Inequality.
2. Describe the gender-related Development Index.
3. What do you mean by Gender discrimination?

6.2 UNDERSTANDING DIFFERENT FORMS OF GENDER INEQUALITY

Gender inequality exists in most parts of the world, from Japan to Morocco, from Uzbekistan to the United States of America. However, inequality between women and men can take very many different forms. Indeed, gender inequality is not a homogeneous phenomenon but a

Notes

collection of disparate and interlinked problems. Let us understand it with the examples of different kinds of existing inequality:

1. **Mortality inequality:** In some regions of the world, inequality between women and men directly involves matters of life and death. Further, it takes the brutal form of unusually high mortality rates of women and a consequent preponderance of men in the total population. It is as opposed to the preponderance of women found in societies with little or no gender bias in health care and nutrition. Mortality inequality has been observed extensively in North Africa and Asia, including China and South Asia.

2. **Natality inequality:** Given a preference for boys over girls that many male-dominated societies have, gender inequality can manifest in parents wanting the newborn to be a boy rather than a girl. With modern techniques to determine the gender of the foetus, sex-selective abortion has become common in many countries. It is particularly prevalent in East Asia, China, South Korea, Singapore, and Taiwan. Moreover, it is beginning to emerge as a statistically significant phenomenon in India and South Asia.

3. **Basic facility inequality:** Even when demographic characteristics do not show much or any anti-female bias, there are other ways in which women can have less than a square meal. For example, Afghanistan is keen on actively excluding girls from schooling (it combines this with other features of massive gender inequality). Also, there are many countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, where girls have far fewer schooling opportunities than boys. There are other deficiencies in basic facilities available to women, varying from encouragement to cultivate one's natural talents to fair participation in rewarding social functions of the community.

4. **Special opportunity inequality:** Even when there is little difference in essential facilities, including schooling, higher education opportunities may be far fewer for young women than for young men. Indeed, gender bias in higher education and professional training can be observed even in some of the wealthiest countries in the world, in Europe and North America.

5. **Professional inequality:** In terms of employment and promotion in work and occupation, women often face a more significant handicap than men. A country like Japan may be pretty egalitarian in demography or basic facilities and, to a great extent, in higher education. Nevertheless, progress to elevated levels of employment and occupation seems to be much more problematic for women than for women men.

In the English television series "Yes, Minister," there is an episode where the Minister, full of reforming zeal, tries to find out from the immovable, permanent secretary, Sir Humphrey, how many women are in really senior positions in the British civil service. Sir Humphrey says that it is challenging to give an exact number; it would require much investigation. However, the

Notes

Minister is still insistent and wants to know approximately how many women are in these senior positions. To which Sir Humphrey finally replies, "Approximately none."

6. **Ownership inequality:** Property ownership can be unequal in many societies. Even basic assets such as homes and land may be very asymmetrically shared. The absence of property claims can reduce women's voices and make it harder for women to enter and flourish in commercial, economic and even some social activities. This type of inequality has existed in most parts of the world, though local variations exist. For example, even though traditional property rights have favoured men in the bulk of India, in what is now the State of Kerala, there has been, for a long time, matrilineal inheritance for an influential part of the community, namely the Nairs.

7. **Household inequality:** There are, often enough, basic inequalities in gender relations within the family or the household, which can take many different forms. Even in cases where there are no overt signs of anti-female bias, like survival, son preference, education, or promotion to higher executive positions, the family arrangements can be quite unequal regarding sharing the burden of housework and child care. For example, it is common for men to work outside the home in many societies. As a result, however, women have to shoulder various inescapable and unequally shared household duties along with outside work. This is sometimes called the "division of labour," though women could be forgiven for seeing it as an "accumulation of labour."

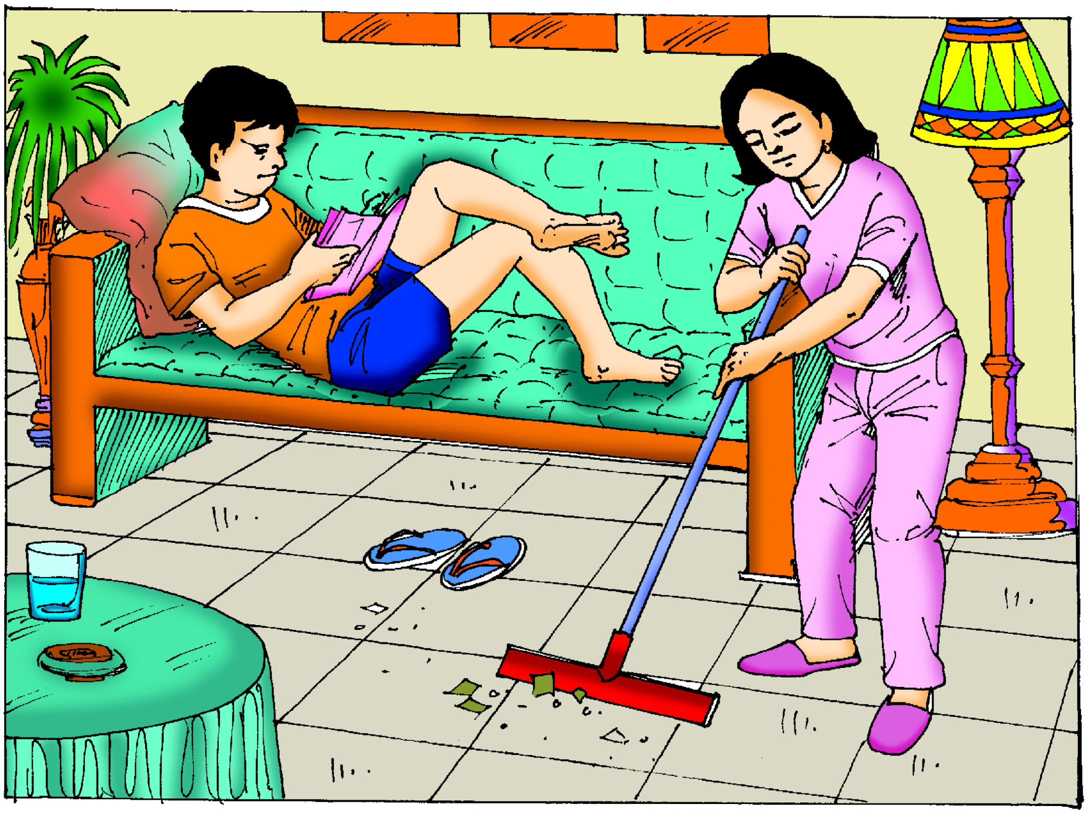


Fig. 6.1: Division of labour: Power of family relations

Notes

The reach of this inequality includes unequal relations within the family and derivative inequalities in employment and recognition in the outside world. Also, the established fixity of this type of "division" or "accumulation" of labour can have far-reaching effects on the knowledge and understanding of different types of work in professional circles.

A Personal Reflection

When I first started working on gender inequality in the 1970s, I remember being struck by the fact that the Handbook of Human Nutrition Requirement of the World Health Organisation (WHO). While presenting "calorie requirements" for different categories of people, household work was classified as "sedentary activity," requiring minimal energy deployment. However, I could not determine precisely how this remarkable bit of information had been collected by the patrician leaders of society.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 6.2

1. Give two examples to show how gender inequality prevails in the family.
2. Explain how does the household inequality impacts the family members.
3. In which parts of the world have mortality inequality been extensively found?

6.3 UNDERSTANDING THE NATURE AND PROBLEMS OF GENDER INEQUALITY

More than 10 million girls are "missing" in India. Females are denied the right to life; as a result, millions die before they are even born, and those who survive are deprived of basic nourishment, education & protection. In addition, there is increasing news of domestic violence, dowry deaths, female feticide and rape every day. The practice of female feticide and female infanticide have contributed to a lower sex ratio.

- **Discrimination against the girl child**

Female Foeticide	Female infanticide
Process of finding out the sex of the foetus and undergoing abortion if it is a girl	Intentional killing of baby girls due to the preference for male babies

Fig. 6.2 : Female Foeticide vs Female infanticide

Table 6.1 Female Sex Ratio in India as Per 2001 Census and 2011 Census

CENSUS YEAR	MALE	FEMALE
1951	1,000	946

Notes

1961	1,000	941
1971	1,000	930
1981	1,000	934
1991	1,000	927
2001	1,000	933
2011	1,000	940

(Source: Census of India, 2011)

The 2011 Census recorded the sex ratio in the 0-6 age group at around 940 females to 1,000 males, which means around seven-eight per cent of females are being selectively aborted. The situation is worse in states such as Punjab, Haryana, Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Delhi, where the sex ratio in many parts has reached 877 females per 1,000 males in the 0-6 age group.

Many surveys show that the female foetus abortion rate is twice as high among educated mothers compared to those illiterate. Poverty, fear and social pressure are said to be responsible for these discriminatory practices. There is legislation to check these practices, the PCPNDT (Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act) 1994.

This act bans the pre-natal sex determination of the child and aims to arrest the declining sex ratio in India.

- **Domestic Violence and Dowry**

The practices of bride-burning, wife battering, rape, prostitution, sexual harassment, widows' isolation, educational opportunities deprivation, and child marriage are a kind of violence against women. These cause mental agony, humiliation and pain. Nevertheless, though we have the Domestic Violence Prevention Bill, we have not focused on its implementation.

Dowry is a social practice by which the woman brings money, goods, or estate to her husband or his family in marriage. However, the demand for dowry and costly articles from the girl's parents and ill-treatment to the wife for not fulfilling the demand may lead to domestic violence and even death. In 1990, the cases of dowry deaths were reported the most from Uttar Pradesh, followed by Maharashtra, West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh. Though anti-dowry legislation like the Dowry Prohibition Bill (1961) has been passed, this social evil is deep-rooted in Indian society.

Dowry is the customary exchange of goods and money at the time of marriage, whereby the girl's parents are supposed to provide gifts to the groom, his parents, and relatives. Most

Notes

often, dowry is forced and imposed on the bride's family to give away expensive goods to the groom's side

INTEXT QUESTIONS 6.3

1. Explain the social practices responsible for the low sex ratio?
2. Which states have a low sex ratio as per Census 2011?
3. Define female infanticide?
4. Which Act prevents the sex determination of a child before birth?

6.4. MANIFESTATION OF GENDER INEQUALITY IN DIFFERENT SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXTS

Social institutions vary across countries, regions and communities. They play a crucial role in defining and influencing gender roles and relations. Gender discrimination within social institutions restricts or excludes women and girls, limiting their access to opportunities, resources and decision-making.

In Indian society, various discriminatory formal and informal norms and practices restrict women's growth opportunities. Such discriminatory practices and norms have restricted women's access to land, credit and property. Even in the case of labour, women are paid less for equal work. Most girls have been denied the right to education and are trained for household work. Women are neglected in decision-making and must follow the decisions made by men in the family. The discrimination and exploitation of women restrict women and girls from controlling their bodies. Sexual harassment, domestic violence and physical assault add to discrimination and inequality against women.

6.3.1 Family

In most Indian families, you might have seen that the male members dominate and make all kinds of decisions. Such kind of system is called a patriarchal system. Such kind of system provides more power to men than women. This system finds its validity and support from religious faiths and beliefs, whether Hindu, Muslim or any other religion. These beliefs are so ingrained that women, convinced or not, accept their subordinate position to men. While boys are allowed to go for higher studies, girls are not. The girls are denied good education, which is considered an obstacle in their marriage. Uneducated or less educated girls and women do not get good jobs and work as domestic workers. Discrimination is seen within the family at the time of eating the meals. While the boys are served healthy, nutritious and choicest foods, the girls are given leftover or low-quality food that may cause malnourishment.

Notes

ACTIVITY 6.1

You may visit 5-6 families in your locality and interview the older woman in the family. Discuss the different kinds of discrimination and inequality she has faced in her family. Then, based on the collected information, list different types of discrimination and inequalities prevailing in the community.

6.3.2 inequality in education

India represents inequality in formal education that begins with school and goes beyond college for higher studies. As per the Census of India, 2011, the literacy rate of India is 74 percent. However, the literacy rate varies over urban and rural areas, reflecting a significant gender divide. In urban areas, the literacy rate is 87.7%, and in rural areas is 73.5%. On the gender divide, the male literacy level is 82 percent, and 65 percent for women. The data reflects existing social facts on the status of girl children in India. For instance, more girls drop out of school than boys in the case of school education.

The household responsibilities, poverty and care of younger siblings are the primary cause of the girls' lower enrolment and higher drop-out rate. As they move to higher classes in school, the proportion of girls becomes less than boys. On the urban-rural divide, the school facilities and formal education in urban areas are better than in rural areas. Though the Right to Education Act of 2009 and the Mid Day Meal scheme have been instrumental in taking schools to the farthest end of the country over the years, the retention of children in school and the quality of the teaching-learning experience need much improvement.

ACTIVITY 6.2

Interview 5-6 girls who drop out and find out the significant reasons for the drop-out of school.

6.3.3 inequality in healthcare

The woman's health is seen with a life cycle approach that goes through all stages of life, such as infancy, childhood, adolescence and adulthood. The poor indices of health for women begin from the stage of infancy. As women grow, their health worsens, and they become prone to physical and mental violence and abuse.

Infant mortality is the death of young children under the age of 1. This death toll is measured by the infant mortality rate (IMR), which is the number of deaths of children under one year per 1000 live births.

Notes

Though statistically (as per the Sample Registration Survey 2017) Infant Mortality Rate marginally dropped to 33 in 2017 from 34 in 2016. However, the female infant reported a higher mortality rate in 24 states out of the total of 29 states; only in 5 states the girls had a better chance of survival than the boys. These states are Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Uttarakhand.

In India, higher female mortality between ages 1 and 5 and high maternal mortality rates are due to the following reasons:

- Inadequate and poor nutrition
- Non-access to primary health care
- Poor reproductive health
- Discrimination against girls

We all know that the Maternal Mortality Rate(MMR) has been high in India primarily due to a lack of institutional medical care in rural areas. Therefore, over the years, there has been sustained emphasis on promoting pre-natal and anti-natal care and institutional delivery. As a result, the latest Sample Registration System (SRS), 2015-2017, has reported that MMR has declined from 130 per 1 Lakh live births in 2014-2016 to 122 per 1 Lakh live births in 2015-2017. However, women are still dying because of undernutrition and the burden of reproduction, mainly due to a lack of readily accessible medical facilities and care.

Maternal mortality rate (MMR) refers to deaths due to complications from pregnancy or childbirth.

Some of the socio-cultural factors that prevent women and girls from benefiting from quality health services and attaining the best possible level of health include:

- Unequal power relationships between men and women. The women are usually the last to avail of medical facilities, preoccupied with household responsibilities and care of other members.
- Social norms that devoid women of education and paid employment keep women at the receiving end of facilities and services available otherwise. Women tend to neglect the early signs of illness and take recourse to medical advice only after the symptoms exaggerate and the illness has already reached an advanced stage.
- Rampant physical, sexual and emotional violence against women reduces their chances of availing of medical and health services, particularly in the case of domestic violence.

The National Health Mission (NHM) aims to strengthen health systems in rural and urban areas. The focus has been Reproductive-Maternal-Neonatal-Child and Adolescent Health

Notes

(RMNCH+A) and Communicable and Non-Communicable Diseases. The NHM envisages universal access to equitable, affordable & quality healthcare services that are accountable and responsive to people's needs.

6.3.4 Inequality in the ownership of resources

Resources mean tools and means of doing things, whether land or industry. The resources constitute the means of production used to produce commodities and earn an income. The resources can be individually or community owned.

Access and ownership of resources beget power associated with decision-making ability. The resources are, however, not only accessible unevenly but several deprives of their ownership. In India, the resources are distributed as well as owned unevenly. Moreover, these are not shared equally among people. In contrast, some people have more resources than others. There are several factors, such as caste, gender, family background and the available facilities, that determine the availability and ownership of resources in India.

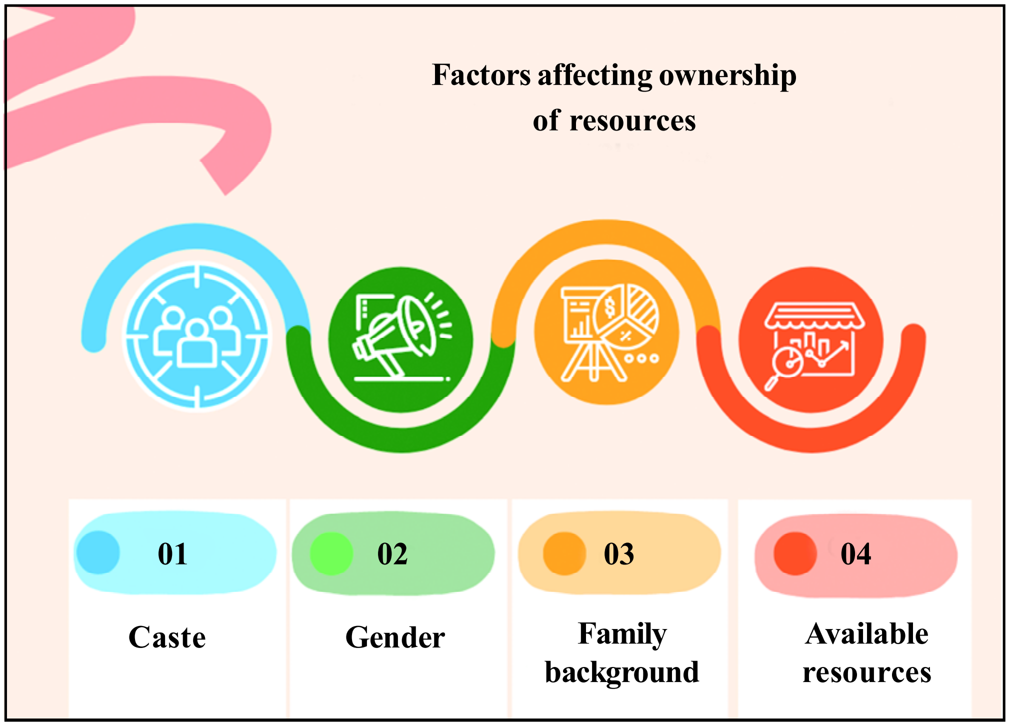


Fig. 6.3: Factors affecting ownership of resources

Amidst the existing gender divide, the ownership of resources such as land, property and several other facilitating tools are owned by the male members more than the female. The land is an asset that gives women financial security, shelter, income, and livelihood opportunities. Though women do more than 80 percent of the labour on farms, only men are officially recognised as farmers. As a result, only 13 percent of agricultural land is owned by women.

While there are several laws, policies, and interventions to empower women through ownership of resources, two laws majorly influence land ownership by women

1. **The Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act 2005** gives a daughter equal rights to her parent's property. This is an essential provision, given that almost 80 percent of farmland gets passed down through inheritance.

2. **The Forest Rights Act 2006** recognises the rights of forest-dwelling communities to forest land and resources. Under this act, women can be joint land owners along with men when applying for individual forest rights and collectively own land with their community under the provisions for community forest rights.

Though these two laws are broadly gender equal, there are social barriers to implementing them. The first major barrier is the existing patriarchal mindset in society. The women are conditioned to consider land as the domain for women to own and till. The family, community and government officials often believe that land matters are the domain of men. As a result, the women are debarred from even asking for their right to land and parental property.

6.3.5 DISCRIMINATION AT WORK PLACE

In contemporary times, women have entered the formal employment sector that has taken them outside the periphery of the home. They now work along with men, seated in a structured work environment with a fixed number of hours, work roles and responsibilities etc. Their presence may be seen in various sectors such as technology, banking, insurance, education, health, research, policy and planning in both organised and unorganised sectors of the economy. Their participation now ranges from wage earners in unorganised sector to decision-makers in the international corporates of the organised sector. However, this has been a transformation for women. However, this journey has not been easy, mainly because of gender prejudice and bias that prevails in the workplace.

In India, female labour force participation has not been promising. As per the International Labour Organisation(ILO) estimates, It has suffered a fall from 33.8 per cent in 2000 to a low of 26.8 per cent in 2012 and it is expected that it will reach an abysmal level of 24 percent by 2030. These are mainly due to lack of access to quality education and underlying social and economic barriers limiting the opportunities for women. As per NSSO 66th round (2009-10) Employment and unemployment Survey, the bulk of women estimate at 123.65 million contributing 95.49 percent of the total women worker are employed in the unorganised sector or unpaid work.

Notes

Fig. 6.4 : Women in the unorganised sector

Whether in unorganised or organised sectors, women are predisposed to differential treatment and opportunities at the workplace, which may hamper and restrict their growth.

Women bear the brunt of gender bias in the workplace in both organised as well as unorganised sectors:

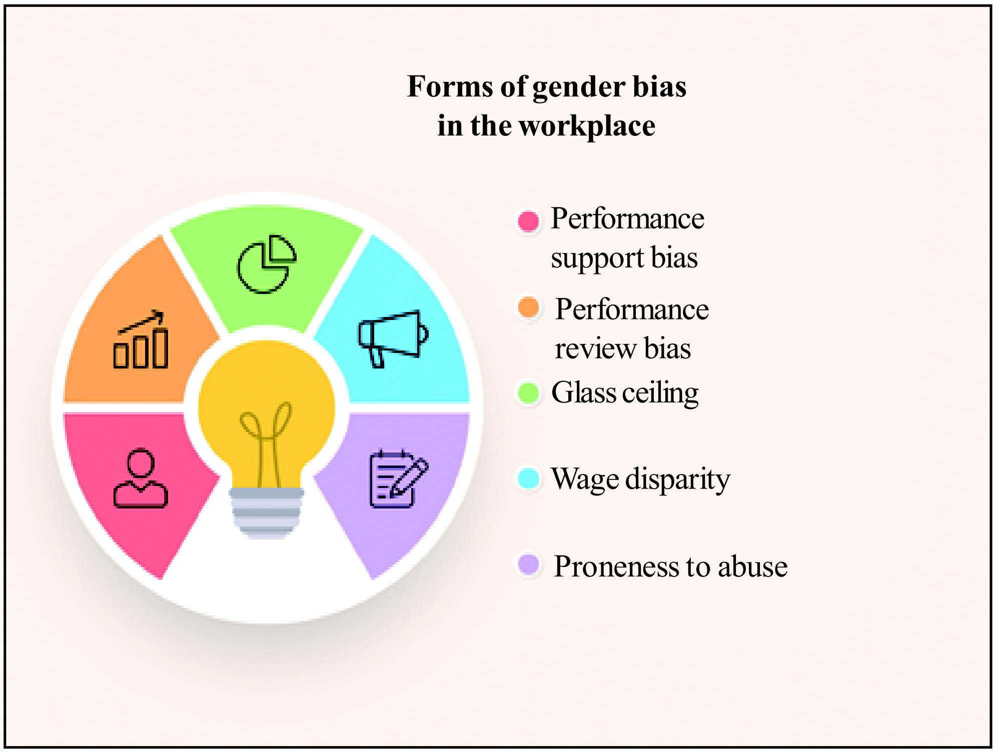


Fig. 6.5: Various forms of gender bias in the workplace

Notes

- **Performance support bias:** when employers, managers and colleagues provide more resources and opportunities to one gender (typically men) over another.
- **Performance review bias:** when employers, managers and colleagues review an employee of one gender differently from another gender — even when the evaluations are purely merit-based. The issues such as security, gender predisposition and marital status are considered at the time of job promotion and appraisals of women employees.
- **Glass ceiling:** an intangible hierarchical impediment that prevents minorities and women from achieving elevated professional success. In the corporate sector, the unseen "glass ceiling" curbs the growth trajectory of women employees. Women bear the double burden of work and family but are not considered efficient for top management positions.
- **Wage disparity:** when women are paid less than men for the same amount of work and working hours. The wage gap between men and women was as wide as 28% in 2018-19, as in the labour force survey data of the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO).
- **Proneness to abuse:** Women are prone to sexual abuse, power dynamics and male dominance in the workplace.

The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prohibition, Prevention & Redressal) Act 2013 is the legislative act in India that seeks to protect women from sexual harassment at work. It was passed by the Rajya Sabha on 26 February 2013. The act is based on the premise that a safe workplace would improve women's participation in work and result in economic empowerment and inclusive growth. The act defines sexual harassment as any unwelcome physical, verbal and nonverbal behaviour with a sexual undertone. It may include;

a Physical contact

b A demand or request for sexual favours

c Sexually coloured remarks

d Showing pornography

e Any other unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature, e.g. leering, dirty jokes, sexual remarks about a person's body, etc.

The act elucidates the forms and manifestations of sexual harassment, the employer's responsibility to prevent it at the workplace, the complaint mechanism, etc. The act specifies two main kinds of situations for sexual harassment of women:

1. **Quid pro quo** occurs when a woman is asked for a sexual favour in exchange for job growth at the workplace. Likewise, the male colleague may demand a favour in exchange for help at work or otherwise.

Case Study - Quid pro quo

Malini is working as a young team leader in a call centre. Known to be forthright, she is dedicated and hardworking. One day, Malini stays late at work with Rajiv, her colleague, to work on an important presentation. Rajiv offers to buy Malini dinner and later drops her at home. After dinner, Rajiv proposes to Malin that he would like her to spend the night with him. Malini refuses politely but firmly and goes home. The next evening, Rajiv repeats his request and, on Malini's refusal, threatens her that if she does not give in, he will tell everyone that she made a pass at him.

In the above example, Rajiv threats Malini that if she does not agree to his 'request' for a sexual favour, he will, in return, smear her character at the workplace as a person who wants to use sexual favours to her advantage. This constitutes a quid pro quo form of sexual harassment.

2. **Hostile Work Environment -** When women employers do not feel safe in the workplace, they have to face sexist remarks, displaying pornography, obscene or sexist graffiti or slogans and unwanted physical intrusion etc.

Case Study - Hostile Working Environment

Kamla is a casual worker in a factory. Her boss asked her for a favour which made her uncomfortable. She refused it straight away. Her boss was offended. He harassed her verbally with comments like she was not a good worker and even spoiled her appraisal report.

The environment in the factory became toxic for Kamla. She understood the reason for his boss's attitude but needed the job desperately, so she did not raise her voice or tell anybody about it.

6.3.6 Inequality in Governance

The female population is 50 percent; therefore, including women in governance and politics is imperative. Governance and politics are two interlinked spheres of decision-making, dominance, power and influence. However, the realm of governance has traditionally been dominated by men. Women are, by and large, excluded except those who belong to politically connected families. It is rather difficult for women without politically connected families to enter and sustain their political and governance positions.

Women are working in several spheres and occupations today, and there is a growing recognition of their capacity to lead and leadership traits. For example, in governance, there has been an increase in women's representation in national parliaments globally from 11.8 percent in 1998 to 17.8 percent in 2008 and 23.5 percent in 2018. Though an increase, there is still a long way to reach the 30 percent benchmark, which is the necessary level of representation to achieve a "critical mass".

Notes

Critical mass is a considerable presence of women legislators in the seats of politics and governance to make a significant impact.

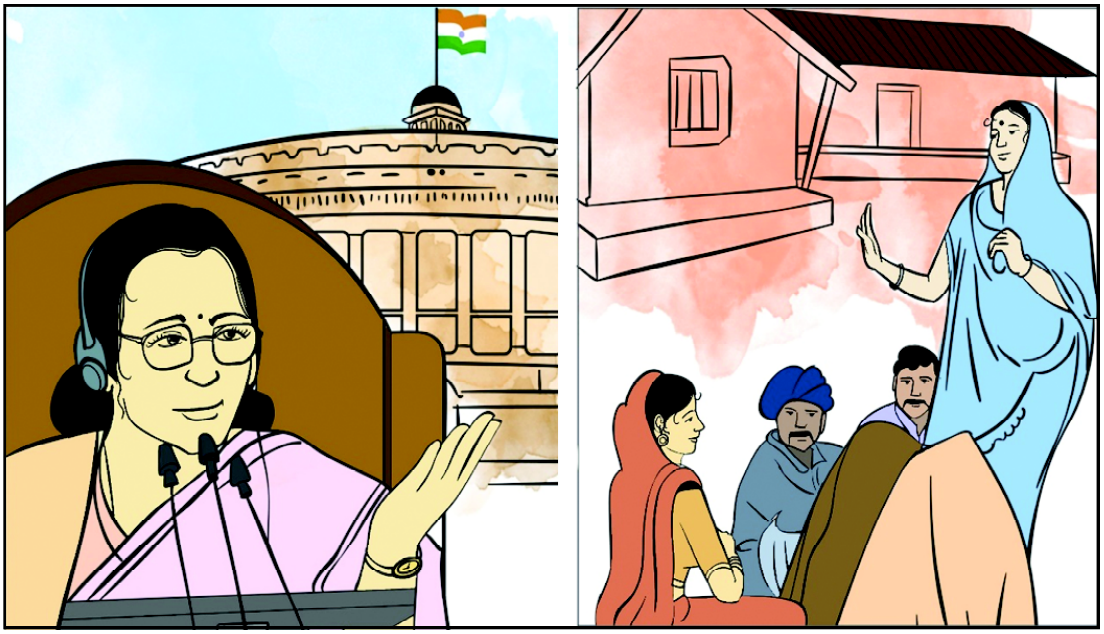


Fig. 6.6: Women leaders in urban and rural governance

Women's participation in governance would make our democracies strong and vibrant. The global development policy focuses on inculcating women's leadership role at local, community and national levels. Divesting power and decision-making capacity to women would facilitate an equalitarian ecosystem.

In India, legislative reforms have been made to bring women representation in local governance. In 1994, the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments reserved 33% of seats in local government institutions (Panchayati Raj System) for women. This effort increased women's participation in grassroots governance at village, block and district levels. Today, around 1.37 million women are elected members of the panchayats.

The 17th Lok Sabha formed by the members elected in the 2019 in the Indian parliament has more men than women. Out of 542 total members in Lok Sabha, the total number of females is 78. Similarly, in Rajya Sabha in 2023, out of the total of 224 members, 24 are females. The Women Reservation Bill, which sought to reserve one-third of Parliamentary Seats for Women, was not passed because various political parties could not form a consensus. As a result, the dominance of men continues in numbers and responsibilities in the parliament.

Notes

INTEXT QUESTIONS 6.4

1. Identify two reasons associated with low enrolment and drop-out among girls in school education
2. How do social norms and practices restrict opportunities for growth for women?
3. Which two Acts protect the ownership rights of women?
4. Why is the process of governance skewed in favour of men?

WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

- Equality is a fundamental human right. It prescribes that every human on the earth is equal to each other and enjoys the same conditions of life. However, when discrimination between men and women is done based on gender, it is called gender-based discrimination. This discrimination constitutes the basis of gender inequality, which exists when men (or women) enjoy a disproportionate share of valued goods such as political or economic conditions, educational status or better job opportunities.
- Gender inequality results in inequalities between men and women at every stage of life, beginning with childhood or even before birth. While the American Anthropologist G.P. Murdock argues that social inequality between men and women is due to biological inequality, social scientists and feminists argue that social inequality is the product of social construction. The key indicators of gender inequality are education, mortality, political representation/participation in governance and economic activity.
- Gender discrimination is the root cause of gender inequality that begins before the child's birth. The widely prevalent practice of sex determination of a child is premised on the superiority of the male child over the female child. The discrimination starts in the family and continues in school, college and the workplace, thus, occurring in private and public spaces. It is due to gender discrimination that women become vulnerable to violence and abuse, which impacts their life negatively.
- Gender inequality exists in all socio-economic contexts, prominent examples being family, education, economy, polity and governance.
- The major problems which have a negative impact on the status of women in Indian society are female foeticide, female infanticide, domestic violence and discrimination at workplace.

- Various measures are being taken by the government to overcome gender inequality through legislation, schemes and programs. Several organisations and NGOs have been working on it, but much more needs to be done. These measures need to be effective and proactive in implementation in order to address the issue of gender inequality.

TERMINAL EXERCISE

1. What is gender discrimination? Explain its implications on the status of women.
2. Which form of gender inequality affects women the most?
3. What is National Health Mission?
4. Why do less number of girls attend school as compared to boys?
5. Does India have a high mortality rate between the ages of one and five? Explain.
6. What is the Sexual harassment of women at workplace 2023 Act? How does it help women secure safety in the workplace?
7. List out the major factors that determine the availability and ownership of resources in India.
8. Describe various forms of gender bias seen at workplace.
9. Expain the benefit of increase in participation of women in politics.

ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

6.1

1. Lower enrolment in formal education, malnutrition, poor health, and low employment participation are a few indicators of gender inequality.
2. GDI measures gender inequalities in three basic dimensions of human development: health, education, and command over economic resources.
3. Gender discrimination is treating someone unequally or disadvantageously due to his/her gender. In addition, it is not necessarily of a sexual nature.

6.2

1. While the sons take ownership of family resources, the girls are deprived of their rights to parental property., land etc. Similarly, in the case of labour and work,

Notes

while women and men may do an equal quantum of work, women are less paid than men.

2. When the family treats sons and daughters discriminately based on sex, the girls remain behind the boys in access to education, health and livelihood training. For example, while the sons may be sent to a good school, the girls are not when resources are scarce.

3. in North Africa and Asia, including China and South Asia.

6.3

1. Poverty and care of younger siblings

2. In the name of socio-cultural practices, women are deprived of growth opportunities such as education, healthy life, skilling, and training. As a result, women's development indicators lag behind men's.

3. The Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act 2005 and The Forest Rights Act 2006.

4. Men have traditionally dominated the realm of governance. This is because power, authority and decision-making are associated with governance, and these are the three desirable personality traits popular among men. Women are, by and large, excluded except those who belong to politically connected families. It is rather difficult for women without politically connected families to enter and sustain their political and governance positions. Therefore we have more men than women in our country's governance institutions.

6.4

1. The practice of female feticide and female infanticide have contributed to a lower sex ratio.

2. Punjab, Haryana, Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Delhi have low sex ratios as per Census 2011.

3. The deliberate killing of newborn female children is the practice of female infanticide.ng

4. Pre-conception and Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act, 1994. It is commonly called PC-PNDT Act.

7

GENDER AND ECONOMY

In the earlier lesson, you learnt about indicators of gender inequality. You also get a brief idea about the manifestation of gender inequality in various social institutions such as family, education, economy, polity and governance, dowry and discrimination. These gender issues related to different dimensions will be discussed in detail in subsequent lessons. In this chapter, you will study gender issues in the economic context.

There are programmes on television, radio and various other forums discussing the equality of men and women in terms of socio-cultural and economic aspects. However, have you ever thought about the contribution of the women of the family, i.e., mothers, wives, sisters and daughters, in managing the household? They bear most of the responsibilities at home, including caring for the child, sick and other dependent members, preparing meals and doing other housework. If the work performed by women at home is ever monetised or estimated in the value of money, it would be a significantly huge amount. However, since work at home is not monetised, it is not considered ‘work’. In all regions, women spend at least twice as much time as men on unpaid domestic work.

Employed women spend an inordinate amount of time on the double burden of paid work and family responsibilities. When unpaid work is considered, women’s total work hours are longer than men’s across all regions. Moreover, the women who work outside the home suffer from another set of problems related to gender discrimination. For instance, they may not get their choice of work, remuneration and working conditions. This draws our attention to the status of women in the domain of employment and the economy, which will be discussed in this lesson.

OUTCOMES

After completing this lesson, learner

- outlines the socio-economic status of women, men and the third gender in the world of work

Notes

- explains the challenges of gender stereotyping and gender discrimination at the workplace and home;
- appreciates women's participation in the world of work through case studies of successful women initiatives at the grass root level.
- suggests suitable measures for improving women's participation in work and economic empowerment

7.1 SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF MEN, WOMEN AND TRANSGENDER PERSONS: CASE FOR GENDER EQUALITY

Women constitute roughly half of the world's population and, thus, potentially half of its workforce. However, the work environment, in terms of employment, nature of work role and access to opportunities for advancement differ for men and women. Women are often disadvantaged compared to men in access to employment opportunities and conditions of work.

The importance of gender equality is highlighted by its inclusion as one of the 8 *Millennium Development* Goals in the year 2000, which serves as a framework for removing poverty and improving lives. In 2015, world leaders gathered at the UN to adopt 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Gender Equality and Women Empowerment were included as one of them.

Fig 7.1: Sustainable Development Goals

Notes

The majority of the world poor are women. Besides economic poverty, women face gender inequality and discrimination, resulting in gender-based violence, economic discrimination, reproductive health inequalities, and harmful traditional practices. These discriminatory practices and the burden of care work at home discourage women from taking an active role in the employment sector.

7.1.1 Extent of Gender inequality in India

To understand the extent of gender inequality, let us understand some important statistical data at the national level.

A. Type of Workers- National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) defines a person as a worker if he /she is engaged in any "economically meaningful activity". This definition, however, excludes many women who are concentrated in the subsistence sector for household consumption from the list of workers.

In the 1981 Census of India, the total population was classified into three broad sections: main workers, marginal workers, and non-workers. However, in the 1991 Census, unpaid workers on farms and family enterprises were added to capture women's economic activities more realistically.

The latest census of 2011 shows that among the total rural workers, females are 30.02% compared to 53.03% of males, and the corresponding figures in urban areas are 15.44% and 53.76%, respectively. Out of these, prominent worker females are 16.69 %, while male workers are 41.63% in rural areas. However, even in the urban areas, while only 11.88 % are female,48.65 % are male workers.

Table 7.1: Status of Main Workers (Census 2011)

Total Workers

	Male%	Female %	Total%
Total	53.26	25.51	39.79
Rural	53.03	30.02	41.83
Urban	53.76	15.44	35.31
		Main Workers	
Total	43.84	15.20	29.34
Rural	41.63	16.69	29.49
Urban	48.65	11.88	30.95

As per the given statistics, the rural and urban areas show the trend that fewer women are

Notes

employed than men. This trend continues in marginal workers, which shows that of marginal workers, 13.34% are females and 11.39% are males in rural areas. On the other hand, around 3.56% of females and 5.11 % of males are employed in urban areas.

Table7.2: Status of Marginal Workers (Census 2011)

Marginal workers

	Male%	Female %	Total%
Total	9.42	10.31	9.85
Rural	11.39	13.34	12.34
Urban	5.11	3.56	4.36
		Non-Workers	
Total	46.74	74.48	60.20
Rural	46.97	69.98	58.17
Urban	46.24	84.56	64.69

This trend reversed in the category of non-workers, with 69.98% as females and 46.97% as males in rural areas and 84.56% and 46.24%, respectively, in urban areas.

While talking about workforce diversity and inclusion, one needs to consider the trans-genders. Trans people have existed across all classes, races and castes. Nevertheless, their recognition has been a struggle. From access to social equality, social rights, education, jobs and many more, the trans community has been discriminated against and marginalised. In the field of jobs, trans people have immense challenges in accessing skilled and decent livelihood opportunities. They lacks the access to better employment and some of them who gets some employment opportunties, face discrimination and exclusion from benefits and entitlements because of their gender expressions.

Towards addressing the issues of transgender persons, various legislations by government such as The transgender persons (Protection of Rights) Bill 2019 and steps by NGOs also helped in providing participation in decent work. Examples are being set by various NGOs and corporate sectors such as NOIDA metro rail corporations and Perriferry-a start-up in Chennai streamlining participation of transgender persons in accessing decent work. You will get more description on these initiatives towards later part of the lesson.

The transgender persons (Protection of Rights) Bill 2019, discrimination against a transgender

Notes

person, including unfair treatment or denial of service concerning employment, education, healthcare, access to public goods and facilities, etc., is prohibited.

Though there is legislation to protect the interests of the transgender community, it is common to see its people begging for money at the road's traffic intersections.

Amidst the dark alleys of discrimination and negative against transgender persons, a few stories show how formal education has empowered a few in the community, and they have crossed the highest level of achievement and social recognition. Let us read some of the success stories of tran gender persons

- **India's first transgender lawyer: Sathyasri Sharmilak**

Sathyasri Sharmila, 36 years, is India's first transgender lawyer. She studied law against all social odds and became a lawyer to fight against injustice. Despite coming from Tamil Nadu, a state securing the highest literacy rank, Sathyasri Sharmila faced tremendous abuse because of her gender. She, however, did not give up and continued her formal education.

"Today, I enrolled my name in the Bar Council of Tamil Nadu and Puducherry and became the first transgender lawyer in India. I have struggled a lot in my life," …………….. Sathyasri Sharmila

---

- **India's first transgender police officer: Prithika Yashini**

Moving ahead of all the odds, Prithika Yashini became the first transgender sub-inspector though she was declared failed by one mark. Nonetheless, her score was re-evaluated in the physical examination, and she came out clear with flying colours.

The following facts emerge from the above data:

1. Female workers are far lesser in number across all types of workers.
2. Women are the maximum in the category of marginal workers in rural areas.
3. While comparing the main workers and marginal workers over the years, it is seen that there is an increase in the participation of women in the category of marginal workers. However, this means that though women are counted as workers, they may not be regularly employed throughout the year. This may be due to agrarian crises and the easy availability of part-time jobs in urban areas. However, it may also be due to other factors like care-giving, and household responsibilities, amongst other socio-economic factors, which determine the female work participation rate.
4. Transgender persons are also denied to access to suitable work due to negative perceptions in the society and also lack of suitable work culture. However, legislations of government and intiatives by NGOs and corporate sectors raised

Notes

the expectations of transgender persons to get access to descent work opportunities.

B. Workforce Participation of Women:

Workforce Participation Ratio (WFPR): WFPR is the number of persons employed per thousand persons.

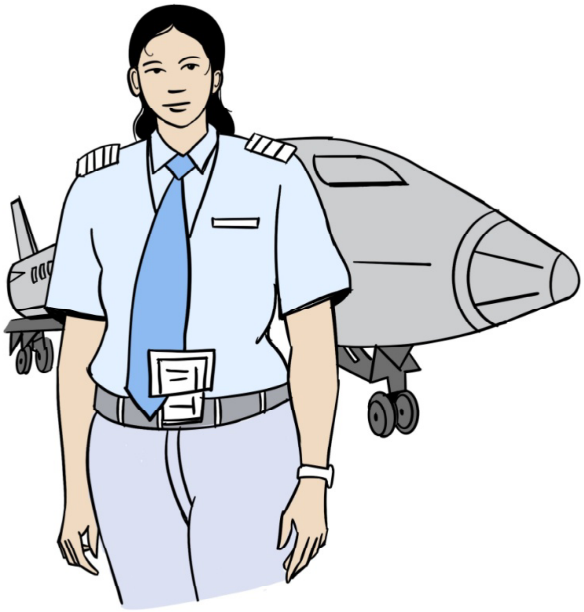
WFPR = No. of employed persons x 1000 / Total Population

WFPR is an indicator used for the analysis of the employment situation in the country.

When measured against the developed countries, women's workforce participation (WFPR) lags considerably behind in India. In urban areas, workforce participation is very low. However, rural areas show a different trend. The reasons for higher WFPR in rural areas are poverty and the necessity of work, as well as other factors like the joint family system, availability of low-skilled employment opportunities etc. Nowadays, the availability of work in rural areas has increased, with employment-generating schemes, such as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA), Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP), Stri Shakti Package and Mahila Udyam Nidhi scheme etc. These have successfully employed women and promoted women's entrepreneurship in India. As a result, women have entered into various occupations such as cab service, managerial jobs, joining the army and other occupations which men traditionally occupied.

Fig: 7.2: Women cab service

Fig:7.3 Women as manager



Notes

Fig 7.4: Women as Pilot

With changing times, we see many Indian women achievers inspiring generations of women to dream big and believe in themselves. From Capgemini to Tinder, a long list of Indian women are leading, showing the world that women are equally capable of leading businesses to newer heights under their leadership and feature in Forbes's Power Women List.

- Kiran Mazumdar Shaw is one such woman leader. A first-generation entrepreneur and global business leader, she has over forty years of experience in biotechnology.

  Kiran Mazumdar Shaw founded India's largest biopharma company Biocon in 1978 from her garage in India. She is a proud recipient of a long list of awards, the biggest being the Padma Shri and Padma Bhushan awards. She even received the EY World Entrepreneur of the Year Award in 2020 and the EY Entrepreneur of the Year India Award in 2019.

- Vanitha Narayanan is another industry leader who is largely credited for making India one of the fastest-growing markets for IBM. Prior to her current role as MD of the IBM-Verizon relationship, she had also served as the Chairperson of IBM from 2017 to 2018.

  Narayanan works closely with the NITI Aayog on formulating policies for making students industry-ready. She has also served as the Chairperson of the American Chamber of Commerce in India and an executive council member of NASSCOM. Vanitha was named one of the most powerful women by *Fortune India* and *Business Today*.

Notes

- Indra Nooyi (née Krishnamurthy) is another very highly accomplished industry leader. Born in 1955, Indra is an Indian-American business executive, former chief executive officer and Chairperson of PepsiCo.

Indra Nooyi has consistently ranked among the world's 100 most powerful women. In 2014, she was ranked number 13 on the Forbes list of The World's 100 Most Powerful Women and the second most powerful woman on the Fortune list in 2015 and 2017. She also serves on the boards of Amazon and the International Cricket Council

Despite so many proactive policies, the work participation rate of women is still low. The work participation rate of women in 2011 was 25.51 percent compared to 25.63 percent in 2001(Census 2011). The Worker Population Rate (WPR) for women in rural areas is 28.7 percent as compared to 15.7 percent in urban areas based on the 3rd Employment Unemployment Survey (EUS): 2012-13; it is the same as 35.1 percent in the rural area as compared to 17.5 in urban areas under 4th EUS, 2013-14. As per the 3rd and 4th Annual Employment Unemployment Survey launched by Labour Bureau in October 2012 and December 2013, the overall Female Labour Force Participation rate increased from 25.0 percent to 29.6 percent under the 5th EUS (2015-16), and the same had decreased to 25.8 percent.

The above discussion concludes that:

1. The opening up of the economy has increased women's participation in economic activities due to the expansion of women-oriented sectors. Many studies in multiple countries suggest that this phenomenon has occurred globally.

2. Large-scale surveys have shown that while rural women's employment has grown over the decades, women are still primarily self-employed or employed as casual labourers in agriculture. Moreover, due to the undervaluation of female work capabilities in many sectors in India, lower wages for women prevail.

3. The discrimination of women workers leads to a gender gap which is defined as the difference between women and men, as reflected in social, political, intellectual, cultural and economical attainment. In several industries, such as knitwear and garments, female workers are paid low wages in India. Thus, these kinds of jobs provide very little upward mobility.

C. Labour Force Participation Rate for Women

Labour Force Participation Rate(LFPR) is the section of the working population in the age group of 16-64 in the economy, currently employed or seeking employment.Female Labour Force Participation Rate (FLFPR) is the section of the working women population in the age group of 16-64 in the economy currently employed or seeking employment.

Overcoming gender bias in employment also contributes immensely to economic development. This is evident from recent trends in women workers as a labour force. As stated in ILO, India Labour Market Update, July 2017 (August 8, 2017), Labor Force Participation Rate for Women in India is one of the lowest in the world. Despite educational gains, women's labour force participation rate in 2017 was 28.5% compared to 82% for men.

Women's labour is a rich and valuable resource for a country as it can significantly boost growth prospects, improve socio-economic conditions, and ensure better outcomes for the next generation. Therefore, enhancing women's participation in the labour force is critical for driving sustainable change and development. A recent research paper (March 2018), titled "Declining Female Labour Force Participation in India: Concerns, Causes and Policy Options", brought out by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), suggests adopting a sectoral approach to boost women's participation in India.

Despite positive growth and development parameters in the last 20-25 years, India has experienced a continuous decline in its female labour force participation rate (FLFPR). The total FLFPR declined sharply from 42.7% in 2004-05 to 31.2% in 2011-12, further declining to 27.4% in 2015-2016. In 2013, International Labour Organization (ILO) ranked India's FLFPR at 121 out of 130 countries, one of the lowest in the world. India also secured a poor rank in the Global Gender Gap Report 2017 by the World Economic Forum, ranking 108 out of 144 economies.

Important observation -

1. A major factor responsible for the lowering of overall FLFPR was the drop in FLFPR in rural areas, specifically in the working age group of 20-44 years. On the other hand, the urban FLFPR, historically lower than rural FLFPR, has fluctuated.

2. Regarding age-specific LFPR, male LFPR is significantly higher than females across all age groups and rural and urban areas. While 96% of Indian males are in the labour force during the peak working age of 25 to 60 years, women constitute around 37-48% of rural females and even lower at around 25-28% in urban areas.

D. Type of Work

The study of employment trends based on work type reveals an increasing proportion of women workers in regular and professional fields.

- According to the surveys, although rural women's employment has increased in the last decades, women are primarily self-employed or employed as casual labourers in agriculture.

- In 2011-2012, around 17.9% of the total employment in India was in regular wage and salaried positions, and urban areas, the gender gap for this employment narrowed.

Notes

- Of the 11.7 million urban working women in 2011-2012, almost 43% were in regular wage and salaried positions(up from 28.5% in 1993–1994).
- Young women are entering non-traditional professional jobs, such as IT and communications.
- Increasing women's labour force participation by ten percentage points could add $700 billion to India's GDP by 2025 (or a 1.4% increase).

Increasing gender parity would significantly impact India more significantly than any other region. This is because India's youthful demographic will add 234 million to the workforce by 2027.

E. Sector-wise Distribution of Women Workforce

The overall sectoral analysis reveals that the sectors with the highest participation of women are manufacturing, transport, storage and communications.

Not surprisingly, around 75% of rural women are employed in agriculture and allied activities. In the manufacturing sector, around 9.8% of rural women are engaged compared to 8.1% of rural men. Other significant sectors of employment for rural women are construction and services.

For urban women, major employment sectors include services, manufacturing, trade and hospitality. The proportion of urban women engaged in services and manufacturing sectors is higher than that of urban men. Specifically, around 40% of urban women are engaged in the service sector compared to 21% of urban men. Similarly, 29% of urban women are engaged in manufacturing compared to 22% of urban men.

The principal cause for the declining FLFPR relates to the stage of development, which suggests a U-shaped relationship between economic development and FLFPR, where FLFPR first declines and then rises. Rising household incomes and increased participation in education also cause women to drop out of the labour force.

The education-FLFPR link, however, appears to be somewhat tenuous as better literacy has not led to higher labour force participation. Additionally, other factors, such as increased mechanisation of agriculture, lack of quality jobs, and unfavourable working conditions, as well as social factors, such as stigma related to women working far away from home and perceptions of women as primary care-givers in the family, are also leading causes of the declining FLFPR.

Besides, two other categories of workers, self-employed and unpaid, contribute to the economy.

7.1.2 Self employment as a Means of Expansion of Women's Work Participation Rate

Self-employment: Self-employment is working for oneself as a freelance or business owner rather than for an employer.Unpaid worker: A person who performs voluntary work. Unpaid labour is defined as labour that does not receive any direct remuneration.

Self-employment is a necessary means of development as it helps to reduce poverty and unemployment. To a large extent, self-employment in India signifies micro-enterprises, which, in many ways, are considered better than wage employment. In the long term, micro-enterprises can become small and medium enterprises. The reason for the higher self-employment rate in rural areas may be the dominance of the agricultural sector.

7.1.3 Large Number of Female Unpaid Workers

Unpaid workers are those who work without pay. These may be either member of a family or co-operative, conscripts or forced labour, volunteer workers who work for charity or amusement;

The rise in women's self-employment is not accompanied by the economic well-being of women because there is an increase in the number of women working as unpaid labourers, either in household enterprises or on family farms. In urban areas, too, there has been an increase in unpaid jobs. The women workers are working more but are receiving no economic benefit.

ACTIVITY 7.1

1. Find the literacy rate amongst men and women in India as per the latest census of 2011.
2. Find out which state in India has the highest and lowest female literacy rate.
3. How many women Members of Parliament were there in the 15th Lok Sabha?*Hint: You may see Census of India 2011 or google search the above questions.*

INTEXT QUESTIONS 7.1

1. Identify the reasons for higher WFPR in rural areas.
2. Which sectors in urban India provide more employment to women?
3. Explain the concept of unpaid workers.

7.1.4 Increase in the Proportion of Women as Unpaid Care-Givers

It is challenging to conceptualise women's work because of the economic invisibility and the compulsory nature of many work roles, especially in India. However, as per the study by The International Labour Organisation (ILO), unpaid care work is among the most critical factors that prevent women from joining and remaining in the workforce.

As per the *Periodic Labour Force Survey 2018-2019* by the National Statistical Office, Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation, Government of India, women in India spend about eight times more hours on care work than men. The data also points out that in rural areas, women spend about 5.7 hours in caregiving activities, while men spend only 42 minutes a day. A similar trend prevails in urban areas where women spend almost 5 hours on care-giving activities, while males spend only 33 minutes daily.

The overall picture emerges that gender-based inequalities continue to exist despite significant efforts. Regardless of non-working status, women have to fulfil all the domestic and care-giving duties at home, which takes a toll on their health in various ways. As a result of overworking, women's mental and physical health is affected.

The question of women joining the mainstream labour force is not only based on their education, willingness to work, and the availability of work but also on other factors. This includes care-seeking family members, socio-cultural environment, distance from the workplace and religion, etc.

7.2 CHALLENGES OF GENDER STEREOTYPING AND GENDER DISCRIMINATION

Gender stereotyping refers to discrimination based on one's sex. Gender Discrimination is when someone is treated less well because of their sex, usually when a woman is treated less well than a man. The act of treating a person, usually a woman, unfairly because of their sex. Source: Cambridge Business English dictionary

Gender stereotyping may involve unfair treatment or infringement upon women's rights based on sex. The culture and upbringing or the socialisation process greatly influence it. For example, have you considered why fewer women exist in the police force, aviation, research and Science and technology? This is because women are primarily considered care-givers, and most of the roles they are considered are mere extensions of their home care responsibilities, such as teaching, nursing and cleaning etc.

Over the years, women have entered various traditionally male-dominated occupations. However, relative to their overall share in total employment, women are significantly underrepresented among legislators, senior officials and managers, craft and related trade workers, and plant and machine operators and assemblers. Conversely, they are heavily

Notes

overrepresented among clerks, professionals, and service and sales workers. Horizontal and vertical job segregation has resulted in the existing gender pay gap. While the gender pay gap is closing slowly in some countries, it has remained unchanged in others.

7.2.1 WOMEN AND THE CORPORATE SECTOR

Several studies have shown that fewer women are making it to the top of the corporate world. The reason is gender stereotyping which poses severe challenges to women's careers. They hold back the prospect of women and their opportunity to move upward. It is, therefore, an intriguing question why the corporate sector, which otherwise thrives on skill and competence, is not fair for women and suffers from the same gender prejudices that prevail in other sectors of the economy.

Developing and sustaining the best talent is the key to remaining competitive in the global business world. Until we break the spell of gender stereotyping, companies will continue to sub-optimise women and lose a vital talent pool that they cannot afford to ignore in the long run.

The issue of gender equality in the corporate sector has gained currency in recent times. The matter came on board not only because the promotion of gender equality is an issue of grave concern but also because it brings an advantage to businesses. With an increasing number of women entering the competitive corporate world, it is realised that with other experiences, skills and perspectives, women benefit from the rise of corporate houses and businesses. However, on the other hand, the corporate world loses a talent pool of women by creating an indifferent environment.

7.2.2 Factors that deter women from employment

While opportunities to earn have increased for women, the nature, terms and quality of their employees have not improved. As a result, women's status relative to men has worsened during the era of economic development. For example, in some post-colonial African and contemporary Latin American countries, economic development appears to have differentially affected men's and women's interests. While the men were drawn to the modern urban sector, the women were left behind in rural areas or found employment in informal sectors as street vendors or casual workers. This resulted in making their lives less secure. Although there is no deliberate policy to restrict women from seeking access to modern sectors or entering the corporate sector of the economy, the dominance of some factors automatically discourages women from entering in this direction. However, the types and candidates of women and their access to opportunities differ from that of men. Women are disadvantaged as compared to men regarding employment opportunities. Many women forego or curtail employment because of family responsibilities. Several other factors deter women from employment in India. These include:

Notes

a. Patriarchal mindset: Despite progress towards gender equality, many Indian families and societies still maintain some form of patriarchal biases that impede women's access to education, job opportunities, and decision-making power.

b. Discrimination at the workplace: Women are often subjected to discrimination regarding pay, promotions, and personal and professional growth opportunities. This discrimination is often grounded in societal stereotypes perpetuating the notion that women are inferior to men.

c. Lack of safe and secure work environments: Due to the prevalence of gender-based violence and harassment at the workplace, women in India may be reluctant to take on jobs that do not guarantee safety.

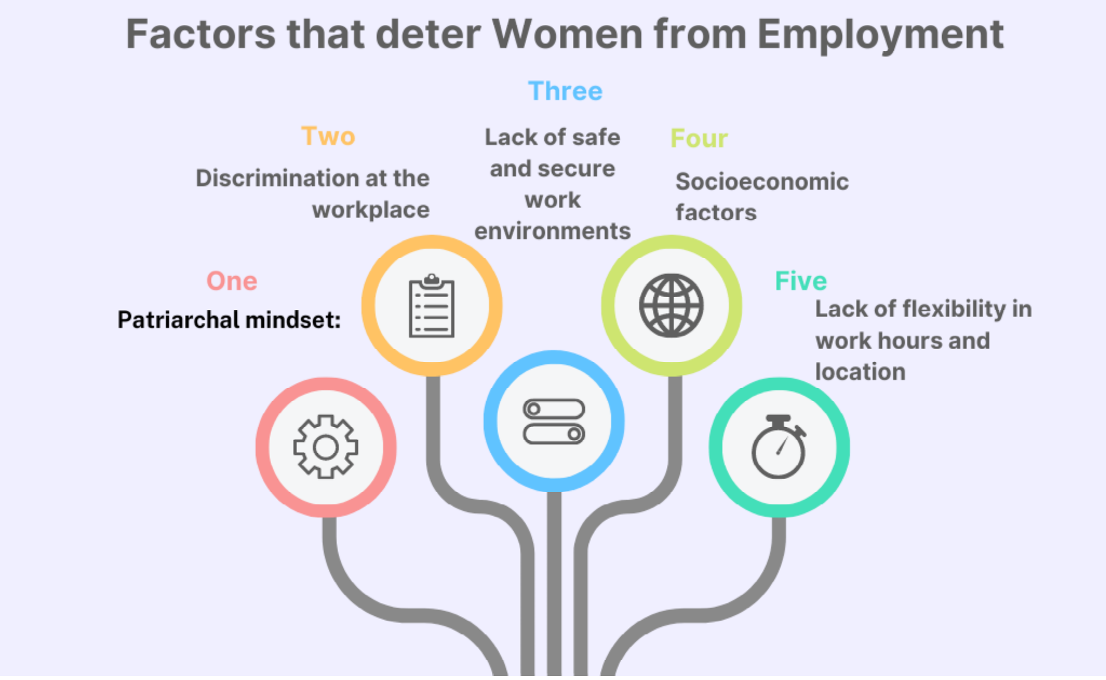


Fig 7.5: Factors that deter women from employment

d. Socio-economic factors: Economic challenges like poverty, lack of resources, and the high cost of living may make it difficult for women to pursue employment opportunities.

e. Lack of flexibility in work hours and location: Workplaces might not always offer flexibility to women, who might need to balance work and family responsibilities.

Removing obstacles and inequalities women face for employment is a step towards tapping women's potential in the economy and enhancing their contribution to economic and social development. In the more developed regions, women spend an average of almost five hours a day on domestic work, whereas men spend less than two and a half hours a day on this or half the time women spend. Although still very far from equitable, the sharing of domestic tasks between the sexes is more favourable in the more developed regions compared to other regions.

Notes

7.2.3 Gender Bias

Gender bias: Gender bias is a preference or prejudice toward one gender over the other.

A strong bias against girls discourages their participation in the corporate sector. As a result, the 'glass ceiling' prevents them from rising on the corporate ladder.

DO YOU KNOW?

In most households in rural India, girls are made to skip or leave school to look after their younger siblings or ailing parents. So even though the girls perform better than boys in the family, the girl's education is sacrificed. In addition, the distance between schools and poor law and order hinder girls' education.Even today, many families send girls to government schools and boys to private schools.

7.2.4 Nature of Gender Segregation

Gender segregation: Gender segregation is the separation of individuals based on gender or sex.

There are two continuing concerns for gender equality in the corporate sector. Without creating a balance between the two, the gender scenario in the corporate sector cannot be improved. International Labour Organization (ILO) 's survey on occupational segregation based on sex for 175 occupations in 41 countries found that occupational segregation by sex is extensive in all countries. Moreover, there are more male-dominated occupations than female-dominated ones. In addition, women were concentrated in certain lower-level jobs, even in female-dominated sectors. Fields such as nursing or elementary school teaching are classic examples of female-labelled professions that are thought to be women-friendly for reasons such as time scheduling, stability of knowledge and lower penalties for leaving and re-entering.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 7.2

1. Why are women fewer in occupations like police aviation, research and Science & technology?
2. Has the status of women in employment improved over time?
3. Do more women remain behind than men in rural areas?
4. Are women more disadvantaged than men in access to employment opportunities? Justify your answer with suitable arguments.

7.2.5The Global trend

Although there are enough facts to support women's potential to serve the corporate sector, the global trend is not optimistic.

Power and decision-making

Around the world, a lack of gender balance in decision-making positions in government persists. Women continue to be underrepresented in national parliaments, where on average, only 17 percent of seats are occupied by women. The highest positions are even more elusive: only 7 of 150 elected Heads of State and 11 of 192 Heads of Government worldwide are women. The situation is similar at the local government level: female elected councillors are underrepresented in all the world regions, and female mayors even more so.

In the private sector, women are on most boards of directors of large companies, but their number remains low compared to men. Furthermore, the "glass ceiling" has hindered women's access to leadership positions in private companies. This is especially notable in the largest corporations, which remain male-dominated. Of the 500 largest corporations worldwide, only 13 have a female chief executive officer. (source: Women's World 2010)

7.2.6 The Case of India

Besides a handful of powerful women in India's Corporate World, the situation in India is no better than in other countries. According to a survey conducted by the World Economic Forum (WEF) in 2009, India ranks among the bottom ten countries in the world in terms of women's participation in the economy. The WEF Report also reveals a remarkable disparity between the wage structure of men and women in corporate India. While the average annual income of a woman is 70,000 INR, it is 2,22,000 INR for men.

Thus, it seems that despite India's admirable march towards economic progress, India still needs to go a long way in integrating its women workforce within the country's economic development. Moreover, the Indian corporate sector must become more conscious of its social responsibility and create firm HR policies to reduce gender-based disparities. However, the latest trend in India Inc suggests that it realises the adverse effects of gender discrimination. Therefore, it is taking steps to include women in the spirit of diversity, equity and inclusion.

ACTIVITY 7.2

Please identify the following :

- The first Indian woman to win gold in the Asian Games.
- The first Indian woman to win Nobel Peace Prize.

Notes

- The first Indian woman to climb Mount Everest
- The first Indian woman to go to space.
- The first woman President of India
- The first tribal women president of India
- The first woman speaker of Lok Sabha.

7.3 CASE STUDIES OF SUCCESSFUL INITIATIVES FOR PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN AND TRANSGENDER PERSONS IN INDIA

By now, you might have a fair idea about the status of women in the country's economy. In this section, we will present some case studies of women who are exemplarily successful in their fields of choice.

Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana (PMMY)

Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana (PMMY) is a scheme launched on April 8, 2015, for providing loans of up to 10 lakhs to non-corporate, non-farm small/micro enterprises. These loans are classified as MUDRA loans under PMMY.

Under the Mudra scheme, aspiring women entrepreneurs can avail of loans up to 10 lakhs to start a micro-enterprise, provided it is a non-farm and non-corporate enterprise. The scheme sanctioned a loan amount of 35002 crores INR in 2019 and 321722.79 crores INR in 2018.

We will briefly describe the two most popular women's Self-Help Group initiatives in India. These are SEWA and LIJJAT which are also some of the intiatives for leveraging participation of transgender persons in decent employment

Self Help Group (SHG) is a small voluntary association of people, preferably from the same socio-economic background. The SHG promotes small savings among its members.

7.3.1 Sewa

The **Self-Employed Women's Association of India (SEWA)** is a trade union for poor self-employed women workers in India. SEWA was founded in 1972 by Gandhian and civil rights leader Dr Ela Bhatt. SEWA's main office is located in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, and it works in several states of India. SEWA had a membership of 966,139 women in the year 2008. SEWA members are the women who earn a living through their own labour or small business. SEWA is strongly supported by the World Bank, which holds it out as a model to be replicated in other settings.

SEWA grew out of the Textile Labour Association, TLA, India's oldest and largest union of textile workers, founded in 1920 by a woman, Anasuya Sarabhai. The original purpose of

Notes

SEWA was to assist women from households of mill workers, and its work was mainly focused on training and welfare activities. By 1968, it organised training courses in sewing, knitting, embroidery, spinning, press composition, typing and stenography for the wives and daughters of mill workers. The scope of its activities expanded in the early 1970s when a survey was conducted to probe the complaints by women tailors against the exploitation by contractors. The survey brought out other instances of exploitation of women workers and revealed the large numbers untouched by unionisation, government legislation and policies.

SEWA grew continuously from 1972, increasing its membership and including more and more different occupations. The beginning of the Women's Decade in 1975 gave a boost to the growth of SEWA, placing it within the women's movement. In 1977, SEWA's General Secretary, Ela Bhatt, was awarded the prestigious Ramon Magsaysay Award, and this brought international recognition to SEWA.

After separating from TLA, SEWA grew even faster and started new initiatives. In particular, the growth of many new co-operatives, a more militant trade union and many supportive services has given SEWA a new shape and direction. SEWA's primary goals are to organise women workers for full employment and self-reliance. In addition, SEWA aims to mainstream marginalised, poor women in the informal sector and lift them out of poverty.

7.3.2 LIJJATPapad

Shri Mahila Griha Udyog LijjatPapad, popularly known as **Lijjat**, is an Indian women's co-operative with the primary objective of empowering women through employment and livelihood opportunities. Starting in 1959 with a seed capital of Rs. 80, Lijjat had an annual turnover of around Rs. 650 crores (over 100 million USD) in 2010, with Rs. 29 crores in exports. It employs around 42,000 people. Lijjat is headquartered in Mumbai and has 67 branches and 35 divisions all over India.

Lijjat is primarily a cottage industry, urban by its origin, that has spread to rural areas. It is considered one of the most remarkable entrepreneurial initiatives by women identified with female empowerment in India.

Lijjat was the brainchild of Nilesh Mansata from Kolkata. The women lived in Lohana Niwas, a group of five buildings in Girgaum. They wanted to start a venture to create a sustainable livelihood using the only skill they had, i.e. cooking. The women borrowed Rs 80 from a Servant of India Society member and a social worker. They took over a loss-making papad-making venture by one Laxmidasbhai and bought the necessary ingredients and the basic infrastructure to manufacture papads. On March 15, 1959, they started producing four packets of Papads. They sold papads of two different qualities, one inferior to be sold at a cheaper rate and the other of standard quality to be sold at a higher rate. Later they started the production of only standard quality.

Notes

Over the years, Lijjat expanded as a co-operative system. Eighteen years was fixed as the minimum age of entry for women. Within three months, there were about 25 women making papads. Soon the women bought equipment like utensils, cupboards, stoves, etc., taking the organisation's annual sales to Rs. 6196. The group got considerable publicity through word of mouth and articles in vernacular newspapers. This publicity helped to increase its membership. By the second year of its formation, 100 to 150 women had joined the group, and by the end of the third year, it had more than 300 members.

In July 1962, the name *Lijjat* (Gujarati for "tasty") organisation was named Shri Mahila Griha Udyog Lijjat Papad. In 1962-63, the annual sale of papads touched Rs. 1.82 lakh. In July 1966, Lijjat registered as a society under the Societies Registration Act 1860. In September 1966, the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) formally recognised Lijjat as a unit belonging to the "processing of cereals and pulses industry group" under the Khadi and Village Industries Act. It was also recognised as a "village industry". In 1966, KVIC granted a working capital of Rs. 8 lakhs (0.8 million) and was allowed certain tax exemptions.

Lijjat received the "Best Village Industries Institution" award from KVIC from 1998-99 to 2000-01. In 2002, Lijjat had a turnover of Rs 3 billion and exports worth Rs.100 million. It employed 42,000 people in 62 divisions all over the country. The 62nd branch became operational in Jammu and Kashmir in 2002, enrolling over 150 members. In 2003, Lijjat received the "Best Village Industry Institution". It also received the PHDCCI Brand Equity Award in 2005. Lijjat marked its 50th year of existence on March 15, 2009.

Lijjat believes in the philosophy of *Sarvodaya* and collective ownership. It accepts all its working members as the owners and equal partakers in profits and losses. The members are co-owners and are fondly called "sisters". All the decisions are based on consensus, and any member-sister has the right to veto a decision. Men can only be salaried employees (accountants, drivers or security guards) and cannot be organisation members (i.e., they are not the owners).

Because of Lijjat's main motive of generating self-employment for women, no machinery is used at the production level, and everything is done manually. However, computers are now used in some Mumbai branches to manage accounts and administration work.[11]

The growth of the Lijjat is often seen in the larger canvas of women and their empowerment. Therefore, the organisation has undertaken various efforts to promote literacy and computer education for member sisters and their families.

7.3.3 A Movement for Women's Empowerment

- **Mahila Samakhya**

Mahila Samakhya – meaning education for women's equality - was launched in 1989 by the

Notes

Government of India in Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and Karnataka.

Today, Mahila Samakhya is active in 12,000 villages and over 60 districts in 9 states, including Bihar, where UNICEF and Mahila Samakhya have been partners for a long time.

The programme's guiding principle is the centrality of education in empowering women to achieve fundamental equality. It strives to make women aware, empowered, capable and self-reliant.

Mahila Samakhya has successfully targeted out-of-school girls by working with the community to create learning opportunities in alternative centres, residential camps and early childhood development centres. The State government, UNICEF, World Bank and others have supported the programme.

Mahila Samakhya in Uttar Pradesh is committed to empowering women to attain equality and their place in family, society and governance. Towards this Mahila Samakhya Uttar Pradesh facilitates the establishment of women's rights, access to qualitative education, health and economic opportunities, and capacities to utilise them.

In Uttar Pradesh, the main planks of Mahila Samakhya are:

- Rights and Governance
- Education
- Health
- Economic empowerment

DO YOU KNOW?

Self Help Group is a village-based financial intermediary comprising 10-20 local women. Most self-help groups are located in India, though SHGs can also be found in other countries, especially in South Asia and South East Asia.

ACTIVITY 7.3

- Identify some self-help groups in your locality
- Identify some SHGs started by women in our country
- Who was the chief minister of Delhi from 1998 to 2013

Notes

7.3.4 Initiatives by corporates/NGOs for improving participatation of transgender infividuals in descent work

Towards empowering Transgender persons, some of the Corporate sectors/NGOs have taken initiatives to support transgender persons to get access to descent work. These are discussed here:

- Noida Metro Rail Corporation (NMRC) officially choose one of the metro station i.e. Secto 50 metro stations and declared it as as 'Pride Station' on 27th October, 2020. NMRC officals dedicated it to the transgender community. NMRC hired six members of the transgender community to serve at the metro station. Before NMRC getting the transgender persons recruited, the NMRC staffs took the help of NGOs to get sensitiatisation training of understanding of the community's concerns. Then, they advertised 6 vacancies including four for ticket vending operators and two for housekeeping staffer for recruitment and based on the suitability, these 4 posts were filled up. Even NMRC also took the steps of redesigning the look of the station through the painting and artwork to signify the essence and spirit of the members of the transgender community.

- PeriFerry, a Chennai-based start-up, was founded in 2017 for working towards the social inclusion of the transgender community. The start-up take number of approaches such as finding out the suitable transgender persons through field visits, social media, referral and online forums; training to the transgender persons across various skills like communication in English, computer fundamentals, and etiquette, and grooming; conducting sensitisation workshops at the workplace to facilitate a safer and more inclusive workforce, and also conduct of routine follow-ups for at least six months to ensure employee and employer satisfaction. Till now, through periphery, trangender

Fig 7.6: Pride Station : Noida sector 50 metro dedicated to Transgenders

Notes

persons were able to get work in various areas such as software. hospitality, accountancy, HR, graphic design, tech support, food delivery, and makeup. It has helped to employ around 370 trangender persons.

7.4 MEASURES FOR IMPROVING WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN WORK AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Based on the sectoral analysis, the sectors with the best employment opportunities for women are manufacturing and specific services.

Sectors

a. **Manufacturing:** According to a CII analysis, the top manufacturing sectors could create more than 21 million jobs by 2025 with the right promotional policies. Women's participation in the manufacturing sectors has increased substantially over the years. Efforts are needed to ensure that this trend continues.Employment-intensive sub-sectors, such as textiles, apparel, food & beverage, furniture, pharmaceuticals and computer and electronic products, have high employment elasticity. Therefore, these offer promising avenues for women, provided that measures are taken for their participation.

b. **Services:** More than 40% of urban women are employed in various services. Similarly, rural females need to diversify out of agriculture into services. In the services sector, sub-sectors such as beauty and wellness, healthcare, and tourism are projected to add more than 26 million workers by 2025 and are much opted by women.

c. **Other sectors**:

- Increasing numbers of women also join sectors such as construction, communications, and financial services. As a result, more significant job opportunities should be created in these sectors.
- More women should be encouraged to join professional, scientific and technical activities. The bias against women in these sectors needs to be eliminated to get benefit from the greater participation of women.

Various recommendations concerning employment supporters that would equip women with the necessary capacity to work in these sectors are also suggested. These are:

1. **Skill development**: Skill training is paramount, especially in rural areas and close to the place of residence of women. Courses offered should be interesting, relevant and mapped to local area requirements.

2. **Supportive interventions**: Access to skills needs to be followed up with assistance accessing finance, marketing, etc. Equally important are digital and financial literacy roles, which would encourage women to take up more technology-driven work in all

Notes

sectors, including electronics, IT, and financial services.

3. **Entrepreneurship development**: Only 13.75% of total entrepreneurs in the country are women. Promoting more extraordinary women entrepreneurship by undertaking necessary training activities and creating financial channels is essential.

Fig. 7.7: Measures for improving women's participation in work

4. **Workplace conditions**: Providing quality jobs and improving workplace conditions through various incentives such as safe and inexpensive transport, clean washrooms, appropriate leave policies, affordable child care policies, flexible working hours, and equal pay could go a long way in encouraging women to join the labour force.

5. **Financial access**: Providing loans and microfinance to women that cater to their diverse needs, with income generating focus, can add more women to the workforce. Schemes such as Start-up India are in the right direction.

6. **Healthcare:** With Anemia and other illnesses impacting women's energy, better health policies targeting improving women's nutrition and health can also be essential for women's economic empowerment.

7. **Better data:** Finally, in the present situation, a multiplicity of labour surveys and a lack of recent data are significant impediments to fruitful policy analysis. Generating the latest and most reliable data must be prioritised for effective policy-driven research.

More extraordinary women's participation in the labour force is imperative not only for achieving higher growth but for attaining overall social and inclusive development and, therefore, must

be a top priority for policymakers in the country. These measures could greatly encourage women to take up more work and provide a substantial boost to female labour force participation in India.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 7.3

1. What is the difference between men and women concerning the time spent in care work at home?
2. What is Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana (PMMY)?
3. List the factors that deter women from being employed.

WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

- Women constitute 50% of the total population. However, they are constrained within the four walls of home and household care work. Compared to men, women work in fewer numbers in the local industry. In rural areas, while the primary male workers are 41.63%, the main female workers are 16.69%. Similarly, in urban areas, while 11.88 % are female workers, around 48.65 % are male. Keeping many women outside the formal economy realm is underutilisation of an essential human resource. It is not only in the interest of women but in the interest of businesses that women join the formal economy through employment in various sectors. This requires a holistic approach and commitment from the government, the corporate leadership and society to promote diversity and inclusion in business and shun the prevailing culture of bias and discrimination against women.
- India has seen quick strides by women against all odds in specific sectors of the economy, such as the manufacturing and services sectors. However, most women suffer from a lack of access to growth opportunities at work. Women generally occupy low-status and non-technical jobs. Glass ceiling-like notions hamper women's growth to high management and company board echelons.
- Special measures need to be taken by the government to let women grow in the formal economy. Promoting formal education and skill training are the twin measures that can enhance women's participation in the economy. A programme like Mahila Samakhya is one such program that brings women together to address problems collectively. The example of Lijjat Papad is another example where the collective strength of women as a self-help group (SHG) has improved their primary conditions of life such as education, health and sanitation. Promoting self-employment is another measure to bring women

out of their restricted space and conduct business for profit and self-growth. Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana (PMMY), which extends loans to women to start a business of their own, is the right step in the right direction.

- In the field of jobs, trans people have immense challenges in accessing skilled and decent livelihood opportunities. They lacks the access to better employment and some of them who gets some employment opportunties, face discrimination and exclusion from benefits and entitlements because of their gender expressions. Still there are number of legislation by government and innovative steps by NGOs and corporate sectors helped in getting descent employment for transgender persons.

TERMINAL EXERCISE

1. Explain the reasons for the increase in marginal workers among women.
2. Identify some of the schemes and programmes of the government of India for promoting women's entrepreneurship in India
3. Discuss the socio-economic factors that deter women from employment.
4. Name a few successful women of India.
5. Why do men dominate in the corporate sector? Explain.
6. How does gender discrimination affect the economy of a country?

ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

7.1

1. The reasons for higher WFPR in rural areas are poverty and the necessity of work, as well as other factors like the joint family system, availability of low-skilled employment opportunities etc.
2. The major employment sectors for women in urban India are service, manufacturing, trade and hospitality. The proportion of urban women engaged in these sectors is higher than that of urban men.
3. Unpaid workers are those who work without pay. These may be either members of a family or co-operative, conscripts or forced labour, or volunteer workers who work for charity or amusement.

Notes

7.2

1. women are primarily considered care-givers. Moreover, most of the roles they consider are extensions of their home care responsibilities, such as teaching, nursing and cleaning, so they are made to choose occupations that are convenient in time and work roles.

2. While opportunities to earn have increased for women, the nature, terms and quality of their employees have not improved. As a result, women's status relative to men has worsened during the era of economic development.

3. While the men are drawn to the modern urban sector, the women are left behind in rural areas due to the care of the elderly and lack of skills to get a job in the urban sector.

4. Yes, women are more disadvantaged than men regarding employment opportunities. In addition, the family responsibilities and care of the elderly curtail their access to employment opportunities.

7.3

1. As per the *Periodic Labour Force Survey 2018-2019* by the National Statistical Office, Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation, Government of India, women in India spend about eight times more hours on care work than men. The data also points out that in rural areas, women spend about 5.7 hours of their time in care- giving activities, while men spend only 42 minutes a day. A similar trend prevails in urban areas where women spend almost 5 hours on care-giving activities, while males spend only 33 minutes daily.

2. PMMY is a scheme launched on April 8, 2015, for providing loans up to 10 lakhs to initiate non-corporate, non-farm small/micro enterprises. These loans are classified as MUDRA loans under PMMY.

   Under the Mudra scheme, aspiring women entrepreneurs can avail of loans up to 10 lakhs to start a micro-enterprise, provided it is a non-farm and non-corporate enterprise. The scheme helps women with their economic empowerment.

3. The factors that deter women from taking up employment are:

   a. Patriarchal mindset

   b. Discrimination in the workplace

   c. Lack of safe and secure work environments

   d. Socio-economic factors.

   e. Lack of flexibility in work hours and location

8

GENDER AND ENVIRONMENT

We live on planet earth and have used natural resources for our basic existence and development. Ecosystem services are fundamental to physical, social, cultural and economic well-being. However, as the needs and greed for man over increased, the misuse of natural resources also increased. As a result, the world's natural environment is under tremendous pressure. Human development threatens the resources and services that nature provides through its habitats and wildlife. The result is that humanity is now facing many problems and health issues, including pollution. Although both men and women face environmental problems, rural women's lives have been particularly affected. When we feel that our existence is in danger and face many environmental problems, we realise that we should conserve the environment and adequately use natural resources. We must preserve and protect the environment for the present and future generations.

In this lesson, you will learn about the impact of environmental degradation on human life in general and women in particular and various concerns related to women's health and quality of life due to environmental challenges. The focus will also be given to describing the role played by humans in conserving natural resources and biodiversity and various environmental movements in India

OUTCOMES

After studying this lesson, learner

- touches upon the impact of environmental degradation and quality of human life;
- explains the concept of environmental conservation and sustainable development;
- examines challenges faced by humans due to the depletion of natural resources and environmental degradation, especially by women from rural, tribal and remote areas;
- highlights concerns such as those related to -

  (a) traditional Chullahs used in rural households and urban slums and their impact on

Notes

the health of women

(b) non-availability of women's toilets and

(c) extra load of work on women.

- describes the pivotal role played by humans in conserving natural resources and biodiversity
- identifies and analyse various movements in India for environmental conservation and protection.

8.1 IMPACT OF ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION AND QUALITY OF HUMAN LIFE

8.1.1 Environmental Degradation and Scarcity of Resources

Environment degradation is the deterioration of the total environment through the depletion of resources available in the form of biotic and abiotic components present in our surroundings, including necessary components like air, water, soil, plant, and animals. It is the reduction of the quality of all other living and non-living elements of our planet.

Scarcity means when the supply is less than the demand. The term scarcity is used in the relative sense, not the absolute one. When the demand is not fully met, and the supply of resources is limited to meet human needs, it refers to resource scarcity.

Environmental degradation results in the quality deterioration of resources and leads to their scarcity.

8.1.2 Population growth and Environmental Degradation

Environmental degradation is a social issue. Population growth exerts pressure on the environment for the fulfillment of the requirements of everyone. As a result, the quality of the environment is deteriorating. The availability of natural resources is limited.

The overexploitation of these resources degrades the quality of the environment. The overgrowing population is causing many problems, for example, the availability of land, food, and quality of environmental services, employability, and other facilities. Therefore, there is a direct link between population growth and environmental degradation.

8.1.3. Quality of Life (QOL)

QOL is the degree, to which a person is healthy, comfortable, and can participate in or enjoy life (source: Britannica).

QOL is "A person's perception of their position in life in terms of the culture and value systems in which they live and about their goals, expectations, standards, and concerns".

The World Health Organization

Notes

QOL includes life satisfaction with the indicators of wealth, employment, environment, physical and mental health, education, leisure and leisure time, social relationships, beliefs, safety, security, and freedom.

Though economic development works to enhance the quality of life, social relations and the status of the environment are also very important. The environment is the foundation of our life. It provides us with air to breathe, water to drink, food to eat, and land to live in. Therefore, the better the environment, the better is the quality of our life.

8.1.4 Impact on the quality of human life

The environment has a natural balance system. All the components, whether biotic or abiotic, naturally remain in equilibrium. When this balance is disturbed by human activities, it causes various environmental problems such as the greenhouse gas effect, ozone layer depletion, and soil degradation, loss of biodiversity, climate change, air pollution and scarcity of water. The main reasons for these problems are uncontrolled population, urbanisation, industrialisation, deforestation, forest fires, unhealthy lifestyle, and many more.

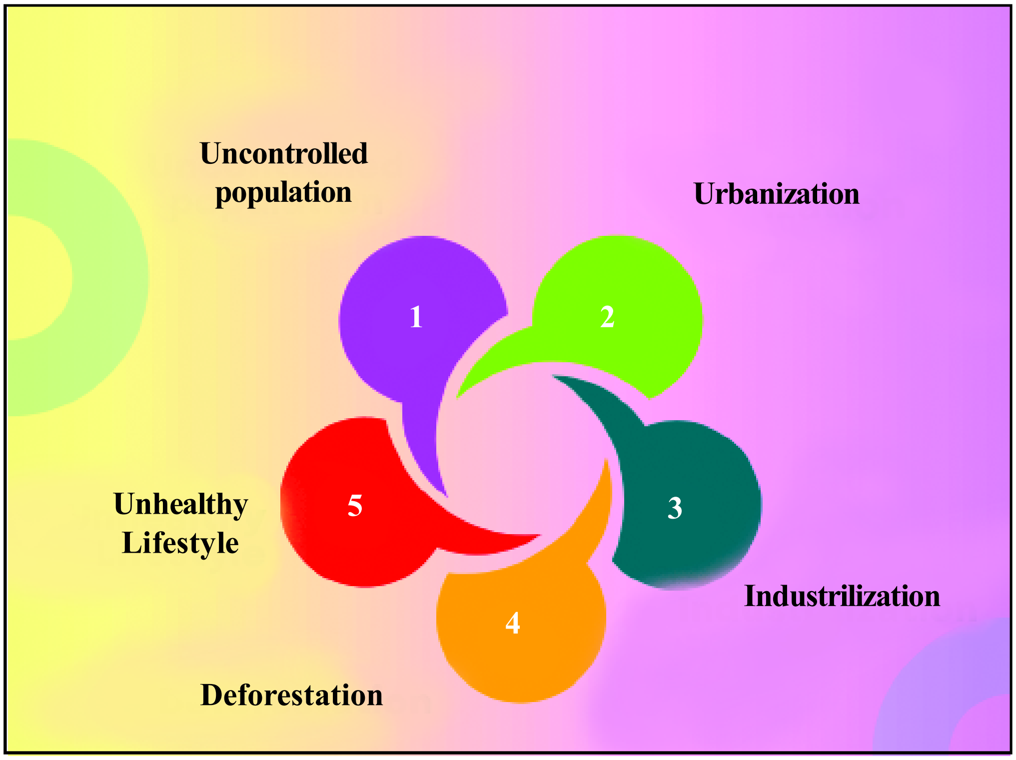


Fig 8.1: Major Causes of Environmental Problems

All these problems affect our life when the availability of natural resources decline. We struggle for drinking water, clean air and a noise-free environment. We need a healthy and happy life for a good quality of life. For this, we need to control the population and stop the exploitation of the environment.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 8.1

1. Describe the meaning of Environment degradation.
2. Explain the relationship between population growth and environmental degradation.
3. Clarify how a natural balance is disturbed.
4. Identify the indicators of quality of life.

8.2 CONCEPT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

8.2.1 Environmental Conservation

Conservation is an action-oriented task. Its main objective is to reduce the deterioration of the quality of substances. Environmental conservation is to protect natural resources from exploitation. Its purpose is to save the environment. It focuses on reducing the degradation of the quality of natural resources and environmental services and maintaining its status. Conservation guides us in the responsible use of natural resources. Environmental conservation can minimise environmental problems, and the balance in nature can be maintained. This will reduce pollution and improve the quality of water, air, and environmental services, further improving our quality of life.

"If the conservation of natural resources goes wrong, nothing else will go right."

M.S. Swaminathan

We can conserve the environment through forest conservation, biodiversity and soil conservation, waste management, recycling, reducing waste, controlling pollution, and creating public awareness.

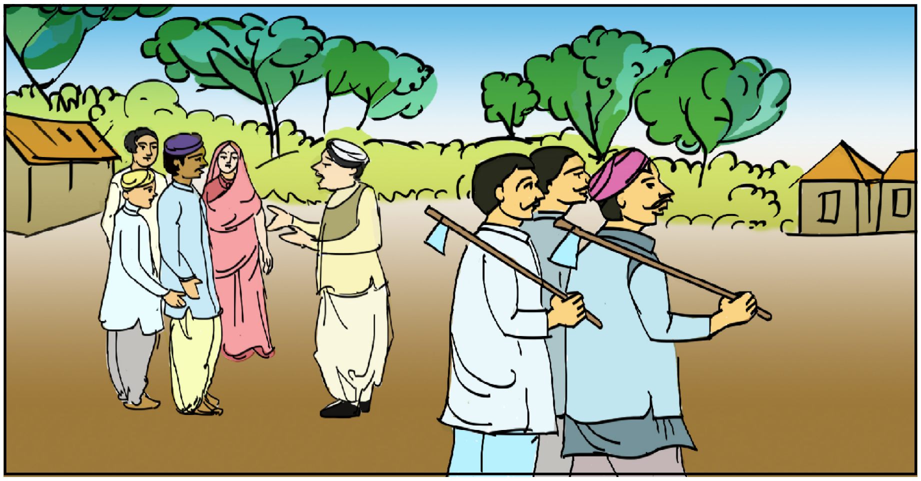


Fig 8.2: Awareness on Environment conservation

Notes

Furthermore, the environment can be restored through conservation through the optimal use of natural resources so that the needs of the present generation and future generations can be met.

8.2.2 Sustainable Development

"Sustainable development is a development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

Gro Harlem Brundtland

Sustainable development (SD) is the development that aims to meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the needs of future generations. The main goal of sustainable development is to achieve a sustainable society where the demands of every individual are met, and they can lead a good quality of life. Achieving a sustainable society requires all the necessities of human life, i.e. clean air, safe drinking water, nutritious food, adequate natural resources and services and healthy people with good relationships, where everyone's financial needs are also met.

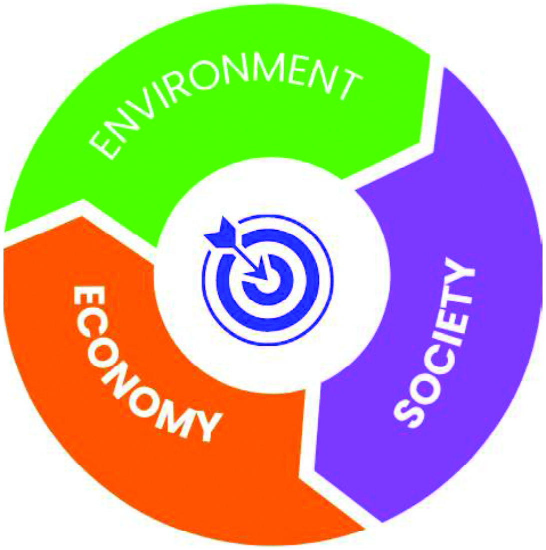


Fig 8.3: Three Pillars of Sustainable Development

The three main pillars of sustainable development are – (1) environment, (2) economy and (3) society. It aims to achieve environmental conservation, economic development and social equality, including political aspects. One of the important elements of sustainable development is environmental protection and conservation.

The United Nations announced 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015 to end poverty and protect the planet. The 17 SDGs are targeted to be achieved by 2030 to achieve a sustainable society and improve the quality of life.

Notes

INTEXT QUESTIONS 8.2

1. What is the main objective of environmental conservation?
2. When is World Conservation Day celebrated?
3. What are the three main pillars of sustainable development?
4. How many sustainable development goals have been announced by UNESCO?

8.3 CHALLENGES FACED BY HUMANS DUE TO THE DEPLETION OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

Human beings face many challenges in life. There is a depletion of natural resources, and the quality of the environment is decreasing, directly impacting human life. The loss of natural resources and environmental damage are creating various problems related to food, nutrition, health, and economic insecurity. These are threatening the basic necessities of human life and livelihood.

8.3.1 Challenges Faced by Humans

Major challenges humans face are freshwater depletion, availability of clean air, pollution-free environment, food security, and lack of holistic health. In addition to the above, there are issues related to climate change, global warming, species loss, waste disposal, natural hazards, ocean acidification and ozone layer depletion. All these environmental issues degrade the quality of human life and threaten the existence of life on planet earth.

The key issue is how to minimise environmental problems and support environmental services to sustain life on Earth.

8.3.3 Challenges faced by Women from Rural, Tribal and Remote Areas

There is a direct relationship between women and natural resources. Depletion of natural resources has a negative impact on women's life. Women need adequate resources to help raise their children, provide medical services and educate them. They have to bear the impact of environmental degradation.

Women from rural, tribal, and remote areas live closer to nature, providing them with a livelihood. Women in developing countries, especially in rural areas, depend highly on locally available natural resources for their livelihood.

These women manage forests as well as the agricultural sector and are also looking after the sources of water, fuel, and food. They are responsible for cooking, fetching the drinking water and arranging the fuel. Their conventional wisdom helps in seed conservation to growing

Notes

quality crops. However, factors like lack of formal education, limited mobility, economic poverty, discrimination in food distribution, food insecurity, family workload, limited access to resources, exclusion from policy, lack of decision-making ability, and lack of access to health care and financial participation add to their vulnerabilities.

8.3.4 How environmental degradation affects women

When the environment deteriorates, women are the first to suffer. They are mainly responsible for providing water, food, fuel, wood, and fodder to the household. Due to environmental pollution, they walk miles to fetch firewood, water, and fodder. Most households use firewood, crop residue, and cow dung for cooking, so women are constantly exposed to an internally polluted environment that affects their health. While fulfilling family responsibilities, they forgo their share of food at home, making them vulnerable to disease and infection. Natural calamities bring hardships to women. In natural calamities, such as droughts and floods, women's situation worsens due to lack of access to water and sanitation, reduced food intake, increased workload and unavailability of resources for the family. During many disasters, the clothes/dress of women impedes their mobility, and sometimes, it causes unprecedented deaths. In such times, women are vulnerable to bullying and gender-based violence at home and outside.

8.3.5 Impact on Human Rights

Human rights are compromised due to environmental degradation, especially fundamental human rights, i.e. right to food, health, and shelter. Environmental degradation is the most significant contributor to hunger, malnutrition, various diseases and limited access to water worldwide. The scarcity of resources leads to migration to cities in search of employment. The deterioration in the environment affects the right to safe and secure life. Environmental degradation and scarcity of resources affect the quality of human life.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 8.3

1. Explain the challenges for rural women due to environmental problems.
2. Which of the following is most affected due to environmental degradation -
    a. Urban men
    b. Urban women
    c. Rural men
    d. Rural women
    e. All above

3. What affects the right to safe and secure life?

8.4 MAJOR CONCERNS RELATED TO WOMEN

Women play an important role in the family as caregivers and providers of food and fuel. The equipment used for cooking food since ancient times is a matter of concern.

8.4.1 Traditional Chullahs

Food is essential to sustain life. Fuel is required to light fixtures for the cooking of food. Traditional Chulhas are used in rural homes and urban slums. TheseChulhas release fumes that pollute the environment and affect the user's health.

Most rural women still depend on locally available traditional fuels such as animal dung, crop residues and fuel wood. Even today, wood or biomass, coal, and kerosene are used as fuels to prepare food in villages and remote areas that cause toxic and environmental pollution. Moreover, in ill-ventilated houses, the pollution generated by these Chulhas affects human health. These lead to many health-related problems, such as acute and chronic respiratory, lung, and eye diseases.

Cooking food with fossil fuels produces smoke that contains many chemicals such as toxic hydrocarbons, Carbon Monoxide gas and suspended particulates (TSP). This smoke, inhaled by women while cooking, is extremely harmful to them. In addition, women and children who stay indoors longer than men are adversely affected due to internal air pollution by these chemicals.

Some common health issues caused by smoke from traditional Chulhas are Tuberculosis, Bronchial infection and other acute respiratory infections.

Pneumoconiosis is the deposition of carbon or silica particles in the respiratory tract and lungs, burning in the eyes, and frequent watering of the eyes, a respiratory infection.

The women should be aware of environment-friendly sources like solar energy, biogas, smokeless Chulhas and other resources that can protect them from disease.

8.4.2 Environmental impact of Traditional Chulhas

- Demand for wood, cattle dung, biomass, and traditional fuels such as coal, contributes to the destruction of local forests, causes deforestation and results in soil erosion and desertification.
- The need for wood is so high that trees are not allowed to grow, and young trees are cut down for wood.
- In areas with low fuel availability, roots and shrubs are also cut and taken for fuel, causing soil erosion and loss of soil fertility.

Notes

Burning fossil fuels and wood produces smoke and carbon dioxide; this pollutes the atmosphere and causes air pollution.

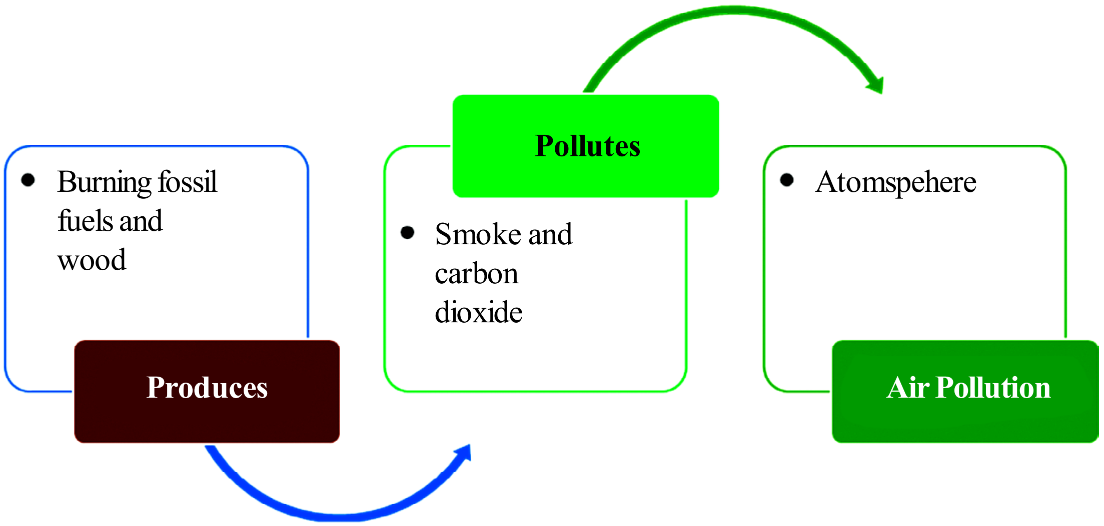


Fig 8.4: Environmental Impact of Traditional Chullahs

Currently, central electric power and gas such as LPG or light petroleum gas are used as fuel. However, the government's new scheme, "Ujjwala", has taken it to rural households.

8.4.3 Non availability of women's toilets

Even in the 21st century, the rural areas of India, in particular, lack infrastructure for toilets, and pen detection is the common norm. There are no private toilets, and their homes are not connected to septic tanks. The children defecate over open drains and unused railway tracks.

The toilets and bathrooms in urban slums are common facilities. This is a major problem for women, adolescent girls and school-going girls. These toilets are ill-maintained and have a limited water supply with garbage around.

The lack of toilets in rural schools is the primary reason for preventing the high dropout rate of girls from schools. In addition, many women hold their urine for long and avoid drinking liquids which may cause abdominal pain and constipation.

Safe and hygienic disposal of human waste is a persistent problem in semi-urban and rural areas leading to high mortality rates and declining health of people in the community.

Lack of toilets and improper sanitation in the villages lead to Diarrhea and several water-borne diseases like Cholera, Typhoid, and Gastroenteritis. Many people die due to inadequate drinking water, sanitation and environmental pollution.

Women in semi-urban and urban also face acute problems. These can be seen in the diagrams:

Notes

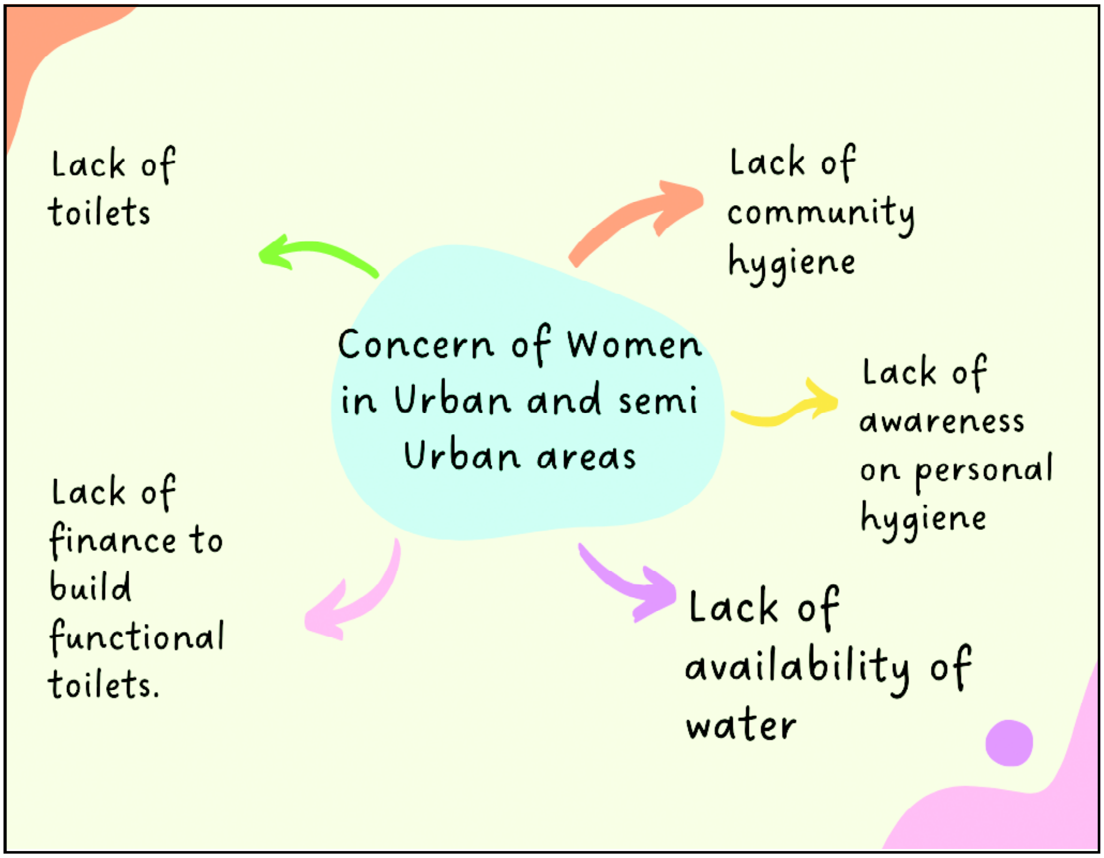


Fig 8.5: Concerns of Women living in Urban and Semi-urban Slum areas

In view of the above, the government has launched the 'Clean India' campaign through various media such as TV, radio, and advertisements. Under the campaign, financial assistance for the construction of toilets is provided.

8.4.4 Extra load of work on women

Women have far more household responsibilities than men. For example, a woman who works in an office has the dual responsibility of home and office. Moreover, if someone's children are small or there is an older person in the house, the childcare and elderly case also falls on the women. In many households, roles and responsibilities are divided away the men and women. However, where there is an equal division of labour, more hidden forms of home care tasks fall on the women.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 8.4

1. What are the traditional sources of fuel in rural areas?
2. What are the common health issues caused by smoke?
3. What is the name of the government's new scheme for fuel in rural areas?

4. What benefits are given to beneficiaries under clean India campaign.

8.5 ROLE PLAYED BY HUMANS IN CONSERVING NATURAL RESOURCES AND BIODIVERSITY

Natural resources are materials and components that are found within the environment. These exist in a natural form, undisturbed by mankind. The amount of biodiversity and geo-diversity present in different ecosystems often characterises a natural resource.

These natural resources are used to make products, called man-made resources. Most of these resources are exhaustible, meaning they have a finite amount of time and can be exhausted if improperly managed.

Biodiversity and Natural resources are the Earth's treasures. Bio means life, and diversity means variety. Therefore, biodiversity is the variety of all life forms on Earth that includes animals, plants, microorganisms, and human beings. Walter G. Rosen coined the term biodiversity in 1985.The benefits of biodiversity are numerous and multifaceted. The ecosystem works well when there is a diversity of relationships because all the species are linked in one way or another and are in continuous interactions. Conversely, the over-extraction of natural resources leads directly to the loss of biodiversity and a collapse of ecosystem services.

Fig 8.6: Smalls steps to eliminate pollution

Notes

8.5.1 Role played by individuals in Conserving Natural Resources

Industrialisation and advancement in human lifestyles affect the availability of natural resources. Therefore, the conservation of natural resources is of utmost importance. For example, waste recycling is essential to conserve natural resources for future generations. For example, various valuable products are made with wood from trees. Recycling these products can minimise the number of trees cut down in a year. Similarly, metal items may be reused and recycled. Promoting the reuse and recycling of products not only saves our natural resources but also helps save energy and reduce pollution.

We need to adopt an eco-friendly way of life to conserve natural resources. For example, one can use a source of energy to conserve natural gas. For instance, hydro, solar, or wind power are healthy and great alternatives for conserving natural resources. Energy conservation can be done in small steps, potentially leading to significant savings. Similarly, one can eliminate pollution by planting trees, making a garden and keeping plants inside the home.

8.5.2 Role of women in conserving natural resources

Women play a key role in managing, conserving, and utilizing natural resources. Women have a direct and deep relationship with natural resources such as forests, soil, and water. In tribal areas, the forest wealth is considered entirely that of women.

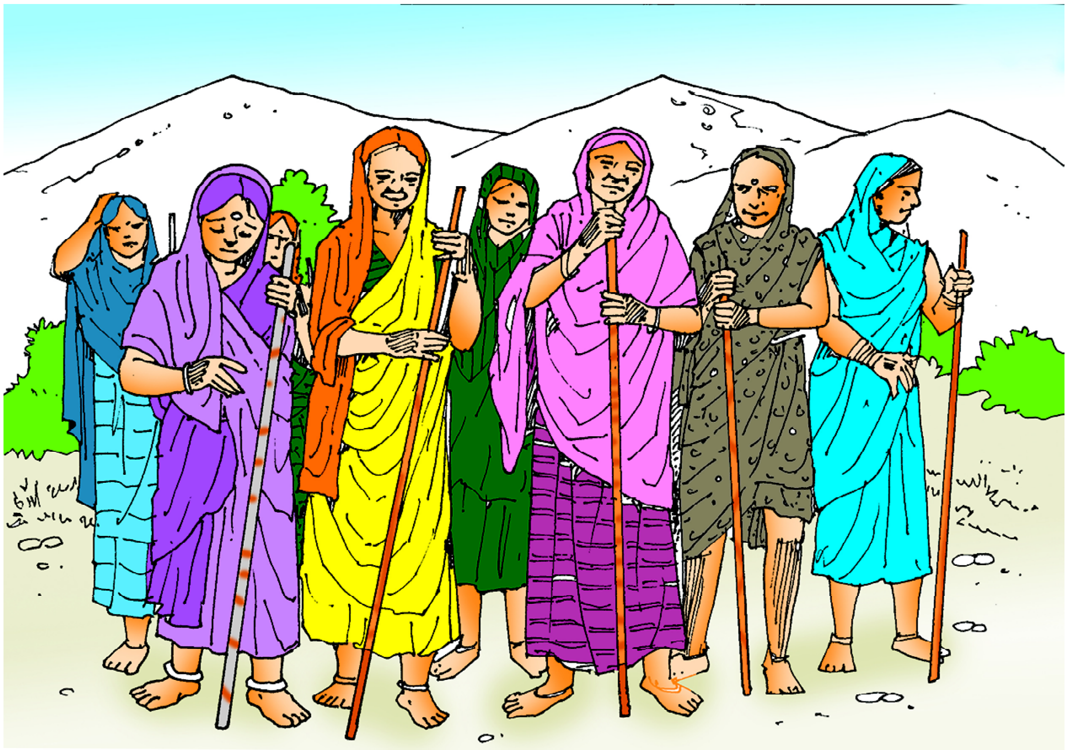


Fig 8.7: Tribal women protecting environment

Indian women have been protecting the environment for centuries, the proof of which is the worship of trees, water, land, air, sun, etc. They act as natural resource managers and are

Notes

important in providing fire and water, healthcare, and waste management. The women are also seen as the custodians of natural resources; they take care of seeds and water sources and have the traditional knowledge of plants, including food and medicines. They tend to be domestic animals. The use of this vast knowledge of women is essential for environmental protection.

8.5.3 Role played by Humans in conserving biodiversity

Humans are an integral part of nature. The sustainable use and management of natural resources are important to biodiversity conservation. There is a greater awareness that biodiversity is important for our existence and well-being. Two major biodiversity conservation strategies are in situ (on-site) and ex-situ (off-site).

In India, at least 10 percent of recorded flora, and possibly a significant fraction of its wild fauna, are threatened, with many on the verge of extinction. In the last few decades, India has lost at least 50 percent of its forests, polluted over 70 percent of its water bodies, built or cultivated upon its grasslands, and degraded many coastal areas.

The Ministry of Environment and Forests is contributing to the conservation of biodiversity using in situ techniques, for example, Biosphere Reserves, National Parks, Wildlife Sanctuaries and other protected natural zones. The joint forest management systems enable the tribal and local communities to have access to non-wood forest products while protecting the forest resources. Botanical and zoological gardens have extensive collections of plant and animal species in different climatic regions of India. The land and diverse food and medicinal plants are also being conserved successfully by the tribal' together with various non-governmental organizations. Women, in particular, have an important role in agro-biodiversity conservation.

8.6 MOVEMENTS ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

8.6.1 Chipko Movement

On 26 March 1974, the auction of two and a half thousand trees took place in Raini village of Chamoli district in Uttarakhand state. The contractor sent the workers to cut the trees. During that time, the local people had gone to Chamoli for compensation for their land. However, Gauri Devi gathered around 27 women and agitated for tree protection. The women clinging to the trees announced they would not let the workers cut. The workers could not cut the trees and had to return. This woman-led initiative in Chamoli district spread throughout Uttarakhand and became the famous Chipko Movement. In the mountain areas, people clung to the trees to save trees. The participation of women was so strong that renowned environmentalists like Sundarlal Bahuguna and Chandiprasad Bhatt joined the Chipko Movement; this movement has brought in front many such women like Bachni Devi, who have led agitations to save the trees in different areas.

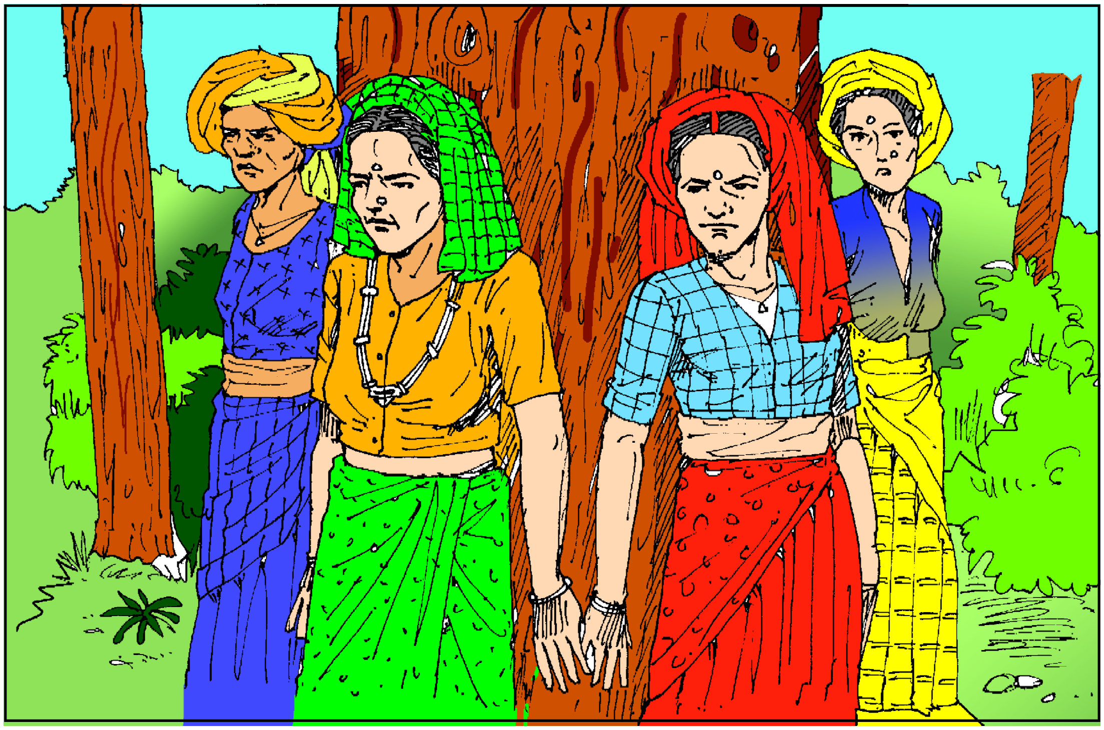


Fig 8.8:Chipko Movement

8.6.2 Navdanya Movement, 1982

Vandana Shiva started Navdanya movement in 1982. Its goal was to protect biodiversity, the environment, and wildlife and promote organic farming. The headquarter of Navdanya is located in the foothills Himalayas outside Doon Valley in Uttarakhand. It is a campaign to preserve traditional grains and their seeds. In addition, it promotes traditional farming practices among the farmers through training. Navdanya has shown that diverse crop production without synthetic chemicals is feasible and economically viable.

8.6.3 Jungle Bachao Andolan, 1980

The Jungle Bachao Andolan started in Jharkhand (then Bihar) in the early 1980s. It later spread to Orissa. At that time, the government proposed replacing the natural Sal Forest in the Singhbhum district with commercial teak plantations. The tribals opposed it through collective representation. This gave birth to the 'Jungle Bachao Andolan'. In many places, the entire nursery of teak, planted by the government, was destroyed, causing a substantial economic loss. Millions were lost due to this. The tribals had made up their mind that they would reclaim their land at every cost. After a long fight, the 'Forest Rights Bill' was enaited in the year 2006.

8.6.4 Narmada Bachao Andolan

Narmada River has primarily influenced the culture, tradition, and livelihood of the indigenous tribal and many nearby rural populations. The Narmada Bachao Andolan was started in the year 1985. Medha Patkar, a famous social activist, started this movement when the dams

Notes

were built on the Narmada River. It started as a struggle for the resettlement and rehabilitation of displaced people due to the construction of the Sardar Sarovar Dam across the Narmada River. It raised concern about submerging people's houses and changing the Narmada River's course. It was a peaceful movement led by Medha Patkar, who sat on a hunger strike throughout.

The court intervened and ordered the government to ensure the rehabilitation of the affected people before restoring the construction of the dam with revised guidelines.

8.6.5 Nature Conservation Foundation

The Nature Conservation Foundation was founded in 1996 as a non-governmental wildlife conservation and research organisation based in Mysore, India. It aims to promote the use of Science for wildlife conservation. While promoting wildlife conservation, they also provide livelihood and development options to local communities. Its high-altitude programs focus on human-wildlife conflicts and the conservation of endangered species. In addition, they research human resource use and its effect on wild species and ecosystems. Its philosophy is a conservation movement that focuses on protecting the species from extinction, maintaining and restoring habitats, enhancing ecosystem services, and protecting biological diversity.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 8.5

1. Evaluate the role of women in protection of environment.
2. What is the Navdanya movement for?
3. How did people protest during Narmada Bachao Andolan?
4. What is the aim of the Nature Conservation Foundation?

8.7 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THE CONSERVATION ROLE OF COMMON MEN AND WOMEN

Over-exploitation of living resources threatens our survival. Therefore, conserving the environment is an essential part of Earth's biological life support system.

Love and respect for nature help us look at how we use natural resources in a new and sensitive way. Think of the beauty of a wilderness, a natural forest in all its magnificence, the expanse of green grassland, the clean water of a lake that supports life, the crystal-clear water of a hill stream, and the magnificent power of oceans; all are beautiful and full of life. These are nature's wealth, and we must conserve them for future generations.

8.7.1 Conservation Role of Common Men

Environmental protection is a part of our culture. The cooperation of the common people is essential for environmental protection. Humans need to develop a green mindset. Minimal use of plastic should be done to save the environment. The waste materials from households should be divided into different sections. Farmers should do organic farming using fertilisers and pesticides to the minimum. By using less electricity, less water, and less gas, a person can contribute to environmental protection. Conservation of rainwater, use of eco-friendly items and tree plantation help in the protection of the environment. People's participation in campaigns is important in environmental conservation.

Fig.: 8.9: Steps to protect and care for the Environment

8.7.2 Women in Conserving the Environment

Women have been a source of inspiration to humanity since time immemorial. Women's foresight, vivacious enthusiasm, and commitment within born leadership qualities are valuable assets to society.

Notes

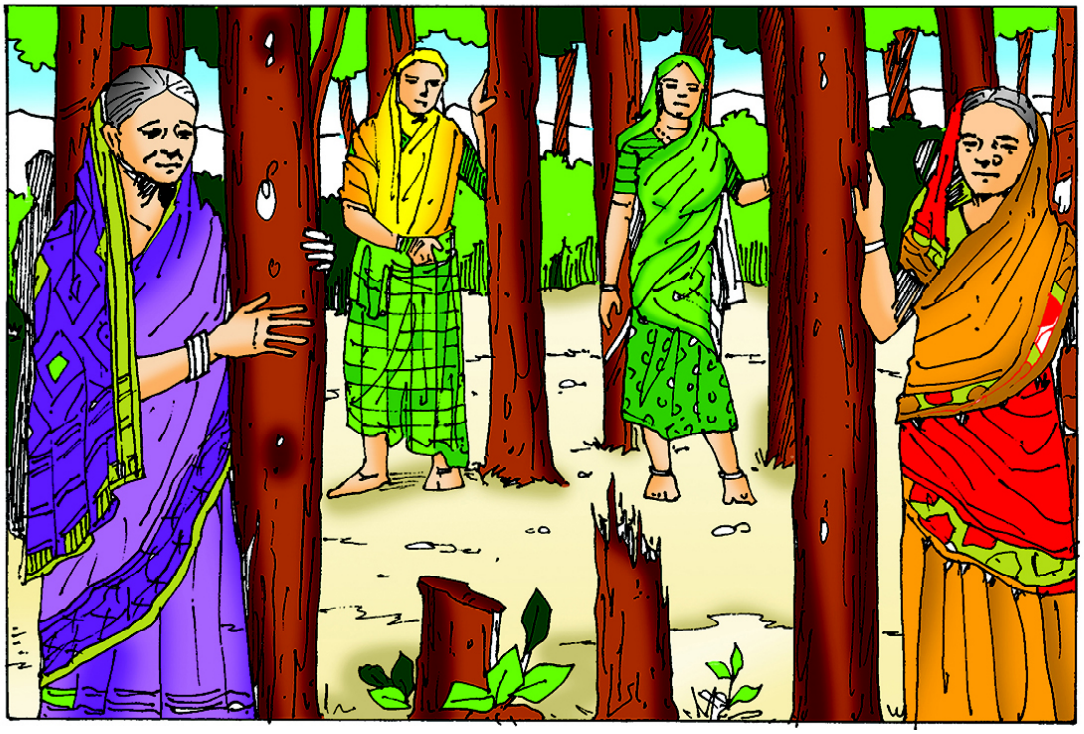


Fig 8.10:Women protecting Environment

Women have had a close relationship with nature, protecting it occasionally. Women are food producers, home food managers, and consumers. They have a broad understanding of local biodiversity with many unique insights into local species and ecosystems gained from practice over centuries. There is a tradition in Uttarakhand whereby a tree is planted by the girl in the mother's place called Maiti after marriage. It builds an emotional bond with the tree, a kind of environmental conservation.

8.7.3 Women and Sustainable Development

India is rich in traditions and cultural values, with women in a prominent place in society. Gender equality and women's empowerment are at the core of the Sustainable Development Goals. Attention has been paid to ensuring women's participation in important areas such as management, environmental protection, and inclusive economic and social development.

Fig 8.11: Awareness about environmental conservation

Global warming can be reduced by 2 °C by empowering women and girls in developing countries, the climate research organisation's repost on according to "Project Drawdown", 2020. They estimate that working on girls' education and family planning can reduce 85 gig tons of carbon emissions by 2050. The slow population growth rate also reduces the pressure on the ecosystem to avoid explanations of resources. When resources are saved, and women are educated, families will get better nutrition and financial stability, ultimately promoting sustainable development. The Rio Declaration also recognizes that women are important in environmental management and development.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 8.6

1. How can life be saved?
2. Why does a girl plant a tree at her mother's house in Uttarakhand after marriage?
3. In which areas, awareness of women should be done?
4. What is required to achieve sustainable development?

WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

- Environmental degradation reduces the quality of the environment's living and non-living elements. There is a direct relationship between population growth and environmental degradation. The better the environment, the better will be our quality of life.
- Environmental conservation guides us in the responsible use of natural resources. It is the restoration of a healthy environment by optimizing the use of resources to meet the needs of the present generation without harming the quality and availability of future generations, which is called sustainable development. The United Nations announced 17 Sustainable Development Goals in 2015, which are targeted to be achieved by 2030.
- The major challenges facing all human beings are lack of fresh water, availability of clean air, pollution-free environment, food security and overall health. Apart from the above, there are also issues related to climate change, global warming, species loss, waste disposal, natural hazards, ocean acidification, ozone layer depletion, social equality etc. Moreover, human rights are compromised due to environmental degradation and explanation. Women from rural, tribal and remote areas mainly depend on natural resources as their main livelihood is dependent on nature.

- Women play an important role in the family as primary caregivers and providers of food and fuel. Using traditional Chulhas releases smoke, which causes many health problems such as. Tuberculosis, bronchial infections, and other acute respiratory and eye infections. It also pollutes the atmosphere and causes air pollution.

- Rural and urban slum areas lack toilets, and people defecate in open fields. Lack of toilets and improper sanitation in village's leads to Diarrhea and other water born diseases like Cholera, Typhoid and Gastroenteritis.

- The benefits of biodiversity are often referred to as the goods and services of numerous and multifaceted ecosystems. Conservation of natural resources is of utmost importance, for which waste recycling is necessary to conserve at least some of the natural resources for future generations. Gender equality is important in natural resource management. Women play an important role in managing, conserving and using natural resources. They play an important role as natural resource managers.

- Biodiversity is significant for our existence and well-being on Earth. Two major biodiversity conservation strategies are in situ (on-site) and ex-situ (off-site). Chipko movement to save the environment started in the Chamoli district of Uttarakhand when people stuck to gated trees to save them. In 1982, Vandana Shiva started the Navdanya movement to protect biodiversity, the environment, and wildlife and promote organic farming. Jungle Bachao Andolan started in Jharkhand (then Bihar) in the early 1980s. Social activist Medha Patkar started Narmada Bachao Andolan in 1985. It began as a struggle to rehabilitate displaced people due to the Sardar Sarovar Dam construction on the Narmada River. The Nature Conservation Foundation is a 1996 non-governmental wildlife conservation and research organisation that aims to promote the use of Science for wildlife conservation in India.

- Conserving the environment is essential to protecting biological life support systems on Earth. Life can be saved only by protecting the environment. Women continue to contribute to environmental protection. As a result, resources are saved, women are educated, and families will get better nutrition and financial stability. The participation of women is essential for sustainable development.

TERMINAL EXERCISE

1. Explain the problems caused by population growth?

2. Justify how environmental degradation impacts the quality of human life**?**

3. Identify the benefits of environmental conservation?

4. How can natural resources be conserved?

5. Define Sustainable Development Goals.

6. How are environmental conservation and sustainable development related?

7. Describe how does traditional Chulhas affect women's health?

8. Discuss why is biodiversity important?

9. How can natural resources be conserved?

10. What will be your role in conserving biodiversity and natural resources?

11. Describe the significance of the Chipko Movement.

12. What was the reason behind Narmada Bachao Andolan?

13. Discuss the role of women in environmental conservation.

14. Evaluate how can women contribute to sustainable development?

ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

8.1

1. Environment degradation is the deterioration of the total environment.
2. There is a direct relationship between population growth and environmental degradation; when the population increases, environmental degradation also increases.
3. Natural balance is disturbed due to human activities.
4. Wealth, employment, environment, physical and mental health, education, social relationships, safety, security, and freedom.

8.2

1. The main objective of conservation is to reduce environmental deterioration.
2. On 28th July
3. Environment, economy and society.
4. Seventeen sustainable development goals.

Notes

8.3

1. Staying healthy is a big challenge for rural women.
2. d. Rural women
3. The right to safe and secure life is affected due to deterioration in the environmental quality.

8.4

1. Animal dung, crop residues and fuel wood.
2. Tuberculosis, Bronchial infection, other acute respiratory infections, and Pneumoconiosis.
3. "Ujjwala"
4. Financial assistance has been given to the villagers for the construction of toilets.

8.5

1. By worshiping trees, water, land, air, sun, etc.
2. It is a campaign to preserve traditional grains and their seeds.
3. People chose the path of peace in this movement and sat on hunger strikes to protest.
4. To promote the use of Science for wildlife conservation in India.

8.6

1. Life can be saved only by protecting the environment.
2. Maiti.
3. Education, awareness of their rights, family planning and ability to make their own decisions.
4. Gender equality, women empowerment, and full participation of women.

MODULE-3

Education and Gender

This module is designed to acquaint the learners with condition of women during pre-independence period and how various laws and movements affected women's education before and after independence. The module also discusses various educational policies emphasizing on how it ensures gender equity. The module also focuses on the role of government schemes and progammes and role of non-government organization in promoting education and gender equality.

9. Development of Women's Education in India

10. Gender and Educational Policies

11. Schemes and Programmes Towards Gender Equality

9

DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN'S EDUCATION IN INDIA

Read about a conversation that a 15-year-old named Shubhi had with her grandma as they were heading home from a departmental store.

Shubhi: If I hadn't been with you when you went grocery shopping, the shopkeeper might have insisted on additional money from you, and you might have ended up paying Rs. 500 more than what was written on the bill.

Grandmother: Thanks Shubhi. You are more educated than I am. As I cannot read English, I was unable to understand the amount written on the bills next to each item. I was never given the chance to go to school.

Shubhi (With mild surprise): Who stopped you from attending school?

Grandmother: Schools were not as easily accessible in our area back then as they are now. Only boys and girls from higher castes and income levels in the area attended school, and relatively few of them went on to college. We were also required to perform household duties.

Shubhi found it extremely difficult to believe that even schools were not available in the locality. She was highly interested in learning how educational situations changed over time and what were the factors behind the significant changes that occurred over several decades. A similar situation now exists in many areas of the nation, which is unacceptable.

In this lesson, you will learn about the condition of women during pre-independence period and how various laws and movements affected women's education both before and after independence.

Notes

OUTCOMES

After studying this lesson, learner:

- understands the evolution of education in India from 19th century onwards;
- describes the agencies that promoted women's education in pre-independent India with a focus on 19th and 20th centuries.
- explains the role of Christian Missionaries, social reformers, and educated intelligentsia in bringing girls' education to India.

9.1. EVOLUTION OF WOMEN'S EDUCATION IN INDIA FROM 19TH CENTURY ONWARDS

To understand the status of women in India, first we must understand the historical context. It is crucial to understand the role that women played during the medieval and later colonial periods.

9.1.1 Women's Education in British Period

Most women were uneducated during the pre-British era. Very few people (belonging to upper caste and higher income group) had access to education. Other castes had very little access to education whereas Brahmins had access to the Vedas and Upanishads. Traditional Paathshalas, Madrasas, Mosques, and Gurukulas were places of learning for young children. Along with courses like Sanskrit, Grammar, Arithmetic, Religion, and Philosophy, Religious education was imparted.

Education in India began to receive some attention during British control with the Charter Act of 1813 and was fully acknowledged in the Macaulay's Minute of 1835. However, women's access to education in Indian society still remained limited. Only after the East India Company enacted the "Wood's Dispatch," which contained the Educational Development Programme, in 1854 were women's employment and education given special attention, and the government took on the duty for ensuring that women were literate.

The Charter Act of 1813

One of the most significant pieces of legislation for the development of education in British India is the Charter Act of 1813. At this time, the East India Company also began investigating and taking initial moves toward accepting responsibility in education. Christian missionaries were able to serve in India and spread education because of this action. Literature promotion was encouraged by the Charter Act of 1913. It provided for the allocation of a sum of at least one lakh rupees annually for the restoration and advancement of literature. It supported the

educated communities of India and strove to introduce and advance scientific knowledge among the inhabitants of the British colonies in India.

Macaulay minutes

Lord William Bentinck played a significant role in laying the foundations of multilingual colonial India. In contrast to Sanskrit or Arabic, which were then used in schools financed by the East India Company, he promoted the adoption of English as the language of instruction starting in the sixth grade. He argued that education should be made available to all and hence reducing the expense of education. Western education would also spread and trickle down to the masses at the same time. Lord William Bentinck introduced the policy of expanding Western education in India based on recommendations from the "Macaulay minutes." He established the Elphinstone Institution of Bombay (1835 AD) and the Calcutta Medical College (1835 A.D.). In a statement made in 1844, Lord Harding underlined that the English knew that Indians would aspire to have government employment, which pushed Indians to pursue education in English.

Wood's Dispatch 1854

It was only in relation to a separate school for females that some advancement in women's education, notably at the primary level, was reported. Additionally, some women received training in preparation for employment as teachers at girls' schools. According to Wood's Dispatch's advice, women's education is essential to the advancement of society. It was always suggested that the government support women's education. "The importance of female education in India cannot be overstated; and we have seen with delight the evidence which is now shown of an increased willingness on the part of many of the locals of India to give their daughters a good education," the Wood's Dispatch read. The Dispatch additionally urged private businesses to support girls' education. The institutions receiving grants-in-aid were to include the schools for girls. During this time, it was strongly advised to support primary education and vernaculars. Also observed were the establishment of three universities in Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay that were modelled after the London University.

It is important to analyse the slow but steady progress that girls' education made during the pre-independent period after taking into account some socioeconomic factors, such as the prevalence of the Purdah system and the discrimination of womenfolk, child marriage, sati, suppression after marriage, the lack of a divorce system, forced self-restraint for widows, and the Devadasi system.

During this time, several socio-religious organisations led by well-known figures like Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar emphasised the importance of women's education in India. To guarantee that women could access education, leaders of the lower castes in India, such Mahatma Jyotiba Phule and Periyar, took series of actions.

Notes

DO YOU KNOW?

In 1883, two Indian women became the first female graduates, marking the beginning of women attending colleges. The establishment of an Indian Women's University, presently known as Shrimati Nathibai Damodar Thackerey (SNDT) Women's University, in Bombay in 1916 is a turning point in the history of women's education in India from 1902 to 1922.

ACTIVITY 9.1

List out important legislations enacted during the British Period for women's education.

9.2.1 Role of different agencies for promotion of women's education in pre-independent India

Arya Samaj

The Arya Samaj was established in Lahore by Swami Dayananda Saraswati in 1871. Its membership increased quickly in the Northwest and the Punjab. He was extremely troubled by the miserable state in which Indian women were forced to live because of the effect of dowry and early marriage, and he understood that educating women would help to elevate their status. He used the examples of outstanding female Rishis like Gargi and Maitreyi to persuade people to promote female education. Swamiji established several Patashalas (schools) in Farrukabad, Kashi, Kasganj, and Challsan around the year 1870. Additionally, he started Meerut's Kanya Patashala, a girl's school.

Brahmo Samaj

The Brahmo Samaj was resuscitated with an increase in number of members from 3,851 in 1891 to 4,051 in 1901, especially in Bengal. They were highly educated and influential people, but their liberalism was starting to wane. The Prarthna Samaj was an organisation that developed in Bombay and is substantially comparable.

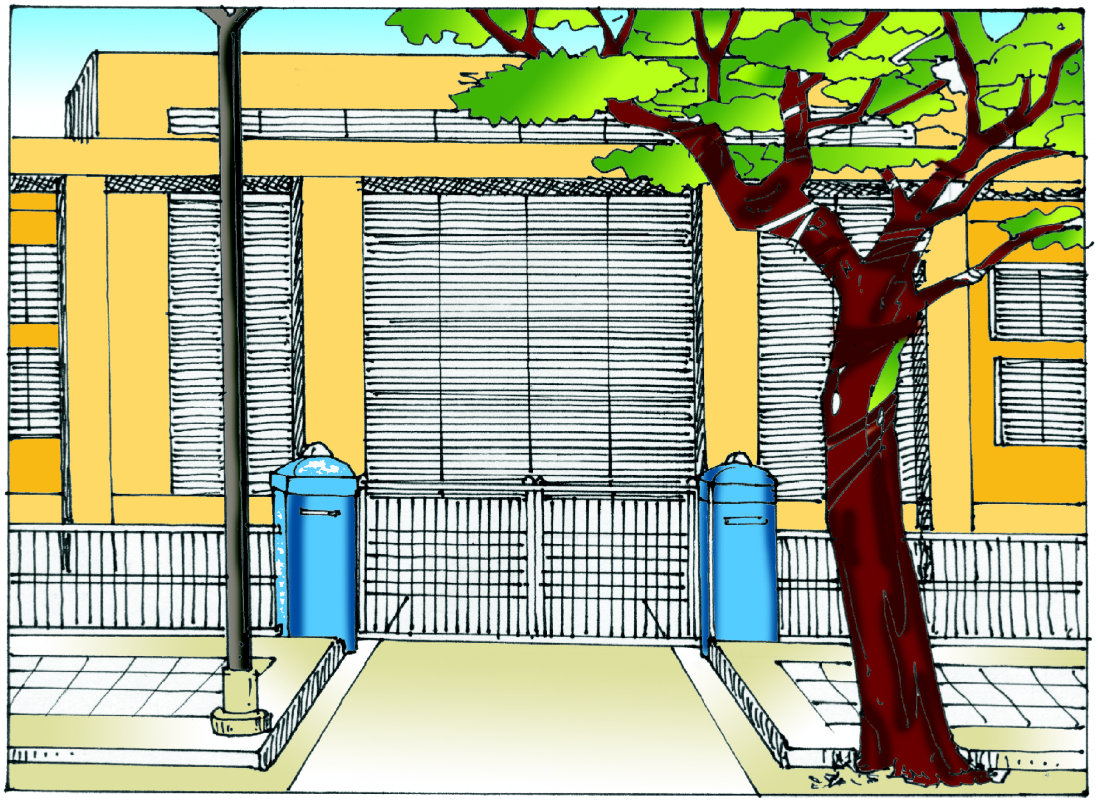


Fig:9.1 The Brahmo Samaj

Notes

All-India Women's Conference

A group of women's organizations under the All-India Women's Conference exerted significant pressure on the colonial authority to provide women with political and legal rights. In 1927, the first All-India Women's Conference was organized to highlight the importance of legal rights and address challenges in promoting education for women. Early marriage was denounced because it interfered with women's ability to pursue higher education. But education for women was primarily seen as enhancing their responsibilities. However, the All-India Women's Conference lacked a wide base of support since Hindu women from upper and middle class and caste backgrounds dominated. It failed to win the support of rural women or women from lower socioeconomic groups in its fight against the traditional Hindu rules and customs.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 9.1

1. Why is the Charter Act of 1813 considered as one of the most important legislations about educational development in British India?

2. What encouraged Indians to practice English Education during the British Period?

3. Why did Swami Dayanand Saraswati emphasize on the education of women?

Notes

9.3 ROLE OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES, SOCIAL REFORMERS AND EDUCATED INTELLIGENTSIA IN GIRLS' EDUCATION IN INDIA.

9.3.1 Role of Christian Missionaries

Early in the nineteenth century, public female education began to emerge, thanks to the missionaries' efforts. It also sparked the rise of a group of educated women, including doctors, teachers, social workers, and scholars. These groups of intellectuals further contributed largely to the promotion of the early women's movement. They pioneered printing, publishing, and journalism. They provided education to women, slaves, native Americans, those from lower castes, and the poor. Additionally, missionaries were in charge of pressuring the government into starting social changes.

Missionaries started their own educational institutions. The government also supported both financially and politically. Female missionaries made extra efforts to reach upper caste women through zenana (women's section of the house) visiting or house-to-house tutoring classes for women while the men were away at work, even though their family members forbade them due to the presence of male teachers and inspectors.

9.3.2 Social reformers and educated intelligentsia and girls' education in India

Men and women have fought alongside throughout the history of women's education society. Social reformers such as Jyotirao Phule, Rabindranath Tagore, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Swami Vivekananda, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, and others devoted their lives to improving the status of women in society. Since many reformers saw that numerous norms and traditions were impeding women from realising their full potential, the social reform movement began in India.

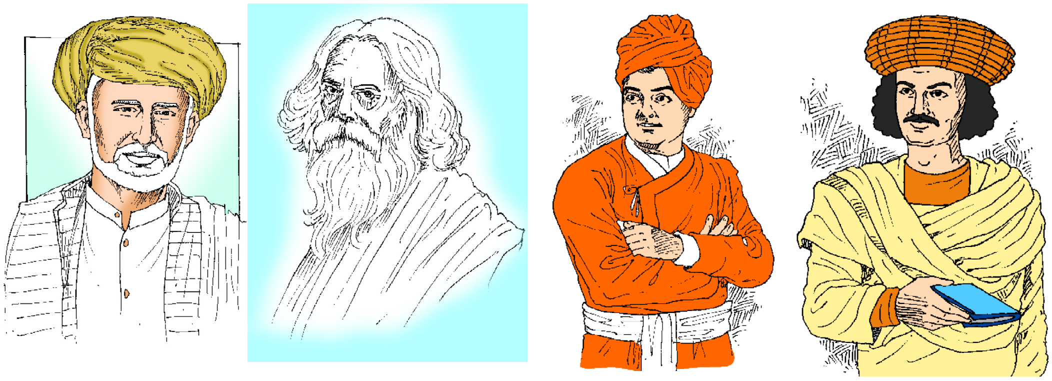


Fig 9.2. Indian Leaders Who Worked For Women's Education Before Independence

Notes

Child marriage, Sati, the Purdah system, and other social evils were pervasive in many areas of India during the pre-independence era. Therefore, social reformers saw women's education as a way to liberate them from social evils and enhance their status. Women's socialisation and education were greatly aided by the work of the Arya Samaj and the Brahmo Samaj. The reformers opposed superstition, orthodoxy, and cruel traditions by utilising contemporary knowledge, science, the egalitarian and humanitarian teachings of Christianity, rationality, and liberalism.

Cultural revivalists and social reformers with liberal ideas had different views on women's education. Proponents of cultural revival saw women as the guardians of tradition and the family.

They believed that by preparing women to resist westernization, education could support traditional Indian culture and values. However, liberal social reformers believed that educating women would help them become wise partners for the emerging class of westernised upper caste men. They will also show themselves to be capable mothers for the following generation. In order to improve women's traditional duties within the patriarchal household, education for women was advocated.

9.3.2.1 Raja Ram Mohan Roy

Raja Ram Mohan Roy, a great social reformer, put laudable effort to transform Indian Society. The progressive ideologies of Raja Ram Mohan Roy also helped to improve Indian Education System. He was the main advocate of modern process of education and scientific thinking. He extensively studied Christianity and other religions. After that, he concluded that India needed to learn a lot because Hindu society is heavily impacted by superstitions. He believed that education was the only way to bring about societal change. The Brahmo Samaj, which he formed in 1828, was based on the ideals of his views about social and religious change. Together with David Hare, he also founded the Hindu College in 1817 with the aim of delivering an English-language education. Education at the college level also placed a strong emphasis on studying Western humanities and sciences.

He strongly supported the induction of western learning into Indian education. Additionally, he founded the Vedanta College to provide programs that combine Western and Indian knowledge. Ram Mohan Roy was adamantly opposed to the Sati tradition, which involves burning Hindu widows. He ran a campaign to increase public awareness and persuaded the British government to outlaw the practice. He concluded that educating women is crucial to putting an end to these evil social practices. Ram Mohan Roy pushed for the expansion and success of women's education. He highlighted repeatedly that society wouldn't be freed from vices without educated women.

Notes

9.3.2.2. Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar

A leading figure in the Bengal Renaissance is Ishwar Chandra Bandhopadhyay, also known as Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar. The reform campaign initiated by Raja Ram Mohan Roy was maintained by him. In addition to being a well-known writer and thinker, Vidyasagar was also a devoted supporter of humanity. He brought about a transformation in Bengal's educational system.

One of Vidyasagar's main aims in his designs was to educate girls. He understood that emancipating and liberating women from the horrible load of injustice and inequality forced on them by the cruel society of the day was impossible unless they could receive education.

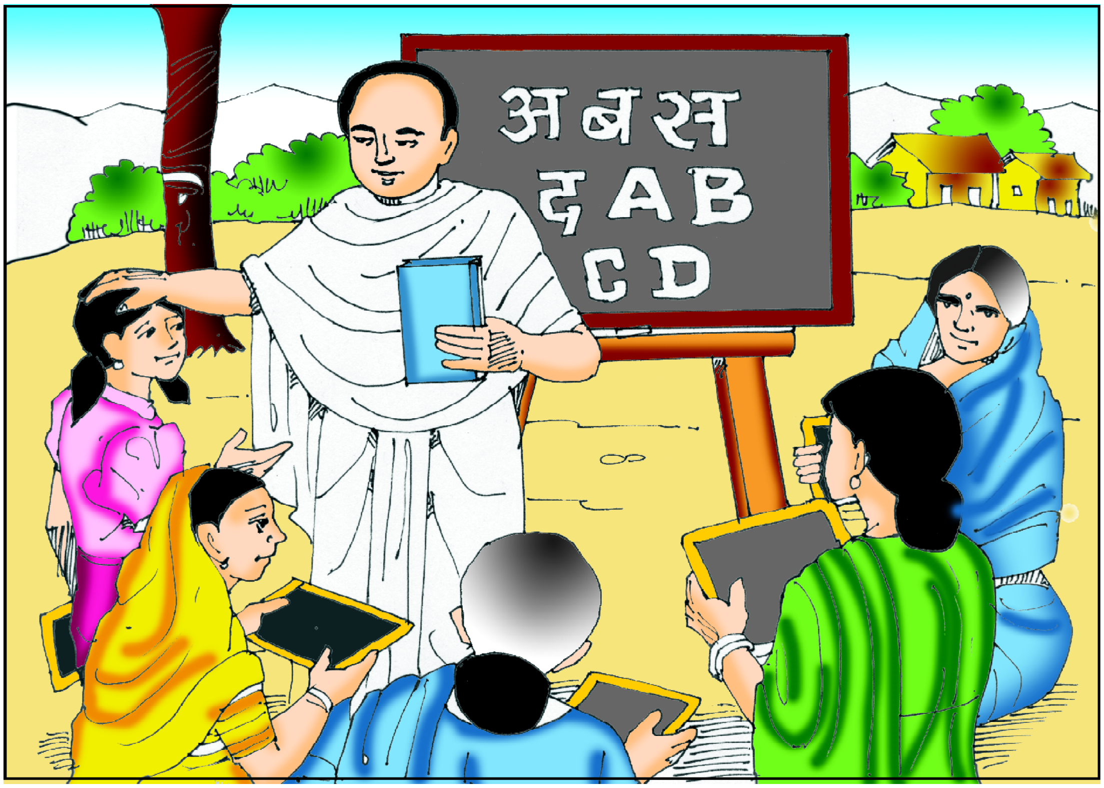


Figure 9.3: Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar

Conservatives in the society, however, were against girls' education. Vidyasagar had to refute these traditionalists with passages from Sanskrit scriptures that specifically ordered the rearing and care of daughters. The entire credit for elucidating the true significance of the Hindu shastras, which safeguard the right of women to education, and for disseminating this information among his fellow citizens, belongs to Vidyasagar. He used his literary talent to assist female education by writing books, pamphlets, and essays.

Vidyasagar made a vital contribution to the education of women by providing reports on the curriculum taught to females in schools, which included reading, writing, arithmetic, biography, and Bengali history, as well as reading passages on various topics, needlework, and sewing.

He started 35 girls' schools in Bengal with 1300 girls enrolled. Additionally, he knocked on the doors to speak with parents, asking them to enroll their daughters in school and offering financial assistance to some of the institutions. He also encouraged the government to establish the "NARI SHIKSHA BHANDAR" fund to provide financial support for the education of girls and urged it to offer grant-in-aid benefits for the maintenance of girls' schools.

9.3.2.3 Mahatma Jyotiba Phule

Indian women's history is full of pioneers who overcame obstacles posed by gender and fought determinedly for their rights. Women today have achieved great success in a variety of fields, including politics, the arts, science, law, and others. Jyotirao Phule, husband of Savitribai Phule, had studied the Hindu scriptures and held the view that all humans were equal. He understood that the only means by which all people might be given with social equality was via education. According to him, being educated is a human right. Education for all was a priority for Mahatma Phule. The Indian Constitution's Article 45, which calls for the universalization of education, was sponsored by him. He also advocated for the education of women. He, therefore, began the process at home by educating Savitribai Phule, his wife. She continued to strive toward challenging and eliminating many societal ills after that. He made a concerted effort to lay the groundwork for education, particularly for women, and for all people, especially the underprivileged segments of society.

In order to accomplish his goals, he established a female school in Tatya Sahib Bhide's residence at Budhwar Peth in 1848. In 1851, he established two new schools, one of which was for girls from lower socioeconomic strata. He published numerous books and used them to promote his revolutionary ideas and educate the public about their rights.

9.3.2.4. Mahatma Gandhi

Gandhi understood that several societal practices, including early marriage, dowry, purdah, and others, had devalued the status of women in society. He argued that getting rid of it will lead to gender equality in the political, social, educational, and legal arenas. He believed that women should be educated since doing so would assure their moral development and enable them to compete on an equal footing with men. Gandhi encouraged female participation in politics and the nationalist cause, but he also recognised the importance of a woman's position as a wife and mother in the household. To better fulfil their traditional duties as wives and mothers in the patriarchal household, he argued that women must receive education.

Notes

? DO YOU KNOW?

The term "universalization of education" refers to the acceptance and provision of educational opportunities to all people, regardless of race, religion, sex, or physical or disability. The concept which was advocated by Mahatma Phule during his time is yet to be achieved.

9.3.2.5. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan

A renowned scholar, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan began his professional life working for the colonial government as a civil servant. He attempted to implement educational reforms after realising that the rigidity of an orthodox worldview harmed the future of Muslims. Despite his deep affection for Urdu and his significant contributions to its growth and enrichment, he sought to adopt English as the medium of education as a corrective remedy.

In 1869–1870, Syed Ahmad Khan travelled to England to carry out research into the country's administrative and educational systems. Sir Syed began advocating for a new intellectual leadership based on contemporary and western scientific understanding. He organised Muslim business people and founded contemporary schools and newspapers to promote an educated understanding of Islam. Sir Syed took on the responsibility of establishing an institution with the same goals. At Aligarh, M.A.O. College was founded in 1877. With the intention of fostering the social, scientific, and economic development of Indian Muslims, it later evolved into the well-known Aligarh Muslim University.

The All-India Muslim Educational Conference was founded in 1886 by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan with the intention of bringing about social and educational change. The program's key goals included encouraging Indian Muslims to pursue western education, enhancing the Urdu language by translating significant scientific literature, and supporting women's education as "necessary for the balanced intellectual development of future generations." In order for Muslim society to develop as a whole, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan underlined the importance of contemporary education for girls and pleaded with the Aligarh University student body to acknowledge this.

9.3.2.6 Swami Vivekananda

One of the most influential religious figures who emphasised the value of social reform and women's education was Swami Vivekananda. If women in our nation receive the appropriate education, he thought they will be able to handle their own difficulties in their own way. His plan for educating women aimed to instill in them a sense of strength, bravery, and respect for their chastity and dignity. He highlighted that daughter should receive the same assistance and attention in their upbringing and education as sons. He advocated for the inclusion of disciplines like sewing, nursing, home science, culinary arts, etc. that weren't covered in the curriculum at

Notes

the time. According to Swami Vivekananda, the degeneration of India can be largely attributed to the lack of female education, which must be promoted.

9.3.2.7. Pandita Ramabai

One of India's well-known leaders in the fight for women's rights and independence was Pandita Ramabai. She made it her life's work to improve the lives of women, particularly widows, abandoned, and downtrodden ones. She founded Arya Mahila Samaj in 1882 to promote women's education in Pune and other areas of Western India. This led to the formation of the Sharada Sadan in 1889.

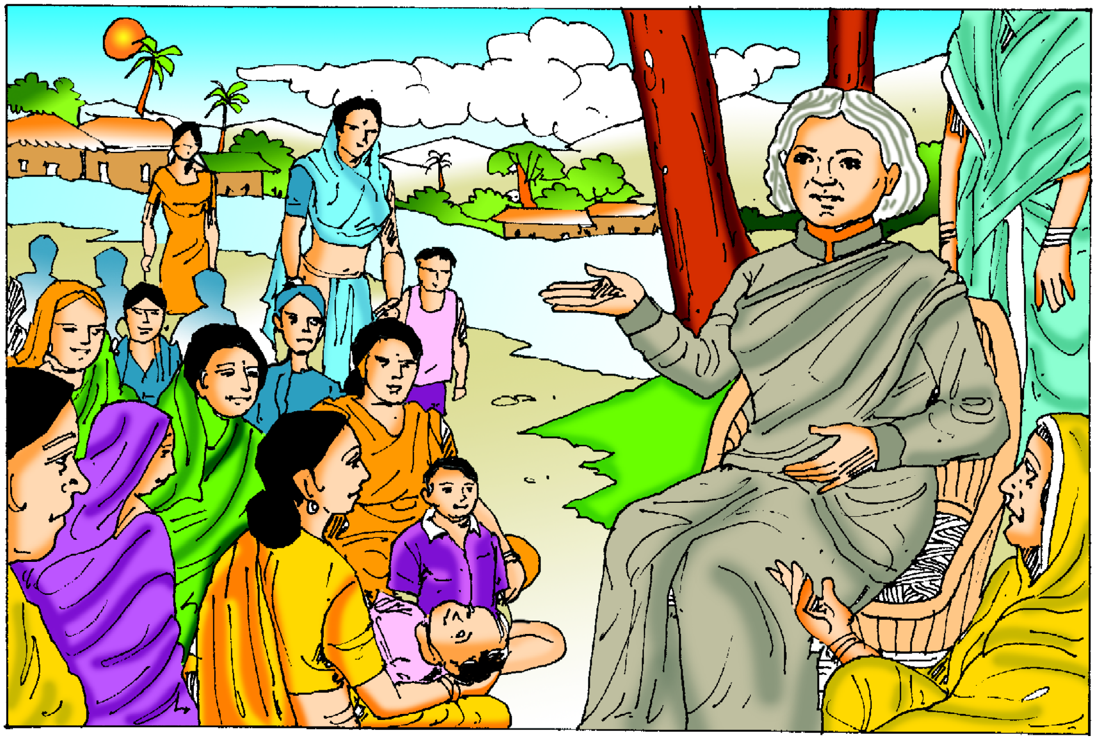


Fig. 9.4 Sharda Sadan (Home for Learning) was established by Pandit Ramabai in Chowpatty, an area of Mumbai (Which was then under the British Raj, known as Bombay).

She was consulted by a commission appointed by the Government of India in 1882 to look into education. She advocated for the training of teachers and the appointment of female school inspectors. She also stated that Indian women should be accepted to medical colleges since the situations of Indian women were such that women could only treat them medically. The proof provided by Ramabai reached Queen Victoria and caused a huge stir. Later, Lady Dufferin launched the Women's Medical Movement because of it. In 1898, she founded a mission in Khedgaon, close to Pune, where widows and underprivileged women were taught a range of skills, including carpentry and how to operate a printing press.

9.3.2.8 Fatima Sheikh

She was the first Muslim woman to teach in India, and she worked at the Phule couple's school, where she taught Dalit children. She assisted Savitribai Phule in establishing the first institution of higher caste Hindus and Orthodox Muslims, the "Indigenous Library," in her own home. Additionally, she used to spend hours counseling parents of girls who were not attending school.

Sheetal reshapes her own destiny and of her family: A case study

Since childhood, Sheetal was fascinated to wear the school uniform and go to school. Many times, she asked her parents to send her to school but they never agreed as they were illiterate, so were not aware of the value of education. She looked after her young brother Rohan while her parents went to work. One day her mother Anita came to know that children get food in the school, so she started sending her children to a nearby government school. Sheetal was very intelligent and did well in academics. She passed her senior secondary level with very good marks, but her parents were not ready to send her to college which was far from her village. Her teacher convinced her parents to send Sheetal to college in a nearby village. After completing her graduation, Sheetal joined as a teacher in the same government school she studied from.

Now her parents do not work as laborers, her younger brother works in a private Multinational company and she got married to a man working in Bank and has two daughters. One of her daughters wants to become a pilot and the other wants to be a doctor. Seeing the success of Sheetal, many parents have started sending their daughters to school. Sheetal goes door-to-door to convince parents who still are not sending their children to school.

ACTIVITY 9.2

Make a list of important personalities who have contributed to Women's education in India apart from the above-mentioned personalities.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 9.2

1. List out the evil social practices that prevented women to realize their full potential in pre-independence India?
2. What was the main objective of the formation of the All-India Muslim Educational Conference?
3. What was the essence of the educational philosophy of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule?

WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

- In the pre-British period, most of the people and majority of women were illiterate. Only a very small number of people got the opportunity for education. In India, education was controlled by upper castes. School Education was imparted in traditional Paathshalas, Madrasas, Mosques and Gurukulas.
- Although the Charter Act of 1813 and the renowned Macaulay's Minute of 1835 gave education in India some attention under British rule, it wasn't until the East India Company's "Wood's Dispatch," which contained an educational development programme, was passed in 1854 that special attention was paid to women's education and employment, and the government took on direct responsibility for ensuring that women were literate.
- Socio religious movements led by eminent persons like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar emphasized on women's education in India. They realized that various customs and traditions were preventing women to realize their full potential. Leaders of the lower castes in India, such as Mahatma Jyotiba Phule and Periyar, undertook several steps to ensure that women could access education.
- Various Committees and Commissions in Independence India including The National Committee on Women's Education (1958-1959), appointed by the Government of India, The Committee on Differentiation of Curricula for Boys and Girls (1964), Education Commission (1964-66) and National Policy on Education (1986), revised in 1992 and New Education Policy 2020 have consistently strived to eliminate gender stereotyping from curriculum and also in educational development of girls/women.

TERMINAL EXERCISE

1. Describe the important recommendations of Wood's Dispatch about Educational Development in India?
2. Do you think that All-India Women's Conference has any role in promoting education for Women? Justify.
3. Assess the role of the Arya Samaj in improving Women's education in Colonial India.
4. Explain the steps taken by Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar for women's education and emancipation?
5. Mahatma Gandhi emphasized on Women's Education. Justify this statement with suitable examples?

6. "Pandita Ramabai was one of the renowned champions of women's education and emancipation in India". Justify the above statement with suitable arguments.

7. There is difference between Curriculum advocated for Gender Equality before and after independence? Explain.

GLOSSARY

Patriarchy: Male domination or authoritative and absolute rule by the male head of the family.

Sati: The practice of self or forced immolation of a widow on the funeral pyre of her husband.

Missionaries: A group of people sent to a foreign country to teach their religion to the people.

Subjugation: The domination and sub-ordination of women by men.

ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

9.1

1. For the first time, the East India Company started taking interest and moving towards taking responsibility in the area of education. Christian missionaries were able to serve in India and spread education as a result of this action. The Charter Act of 1913 also provided encouragement for the promotion of Literature.
2. The All India Women's Conference has played an important role because it emphasized that the English knowing Indians would get Government jobs.
3. Swami Dayanand Saraswati was deeply disturbed by the sad plight of Indian women due to the influence of Dowry and early marriage.

9.2

1. Child Marriage, Sati, Purdah System.
2. The All-India Muslim Education Conference's primary goals were to advance western education among Indian Musllims and to enrich the Urdu language through the translation of significant scientific publications and advocating education for women "as essential for the balanced intellectual development of future generations."
3. To be educated is a human right.

10

GENDER AND EDUCATIONAL POLICIES

THE BETTER INDIA, a Radio Show, presented a heart-touching story of a girl, ***ROJA,*** from rural Karnataka, who had fought all odds to pursue her education. This 14-year-old girl encountered many obstacles that prevented her from remaining in school. However, she was determined to pursue her passion and reach out to the stars. As Priya Pillai interviewed her, she was asked why girls did not stay in school. To this, she sadly replied, "parents think girls will marry and go away to live in another house. All the money they spend on sending girls to school will only benefit an outside family. So, instead of daughters, they send their sons to school". She continued, "my family was so poor that they could not buy any books for me. Then, the Government started to give textbooks which helped me a lot". She qualified for scholarships close to Rs. 3400 per month to get her bicycle to ride to school. The school provided milk to drink and a meal to eat every day.

Our heart goes out to millions of such girls who are married off at a very young age and do not have access to education. Poverty often is an obstacle. However, various government programmes have supported them to continue with their education. In view of the above, this lesson aims to look at the educational policies that aim to maintain gender equity and help those girls who want to rise above the deprivation in their lives and move ahead with their dreams and urges to study and build a career.

OUTCOMES

After studying this lesson, learner:

- analyses the educational policies from a gender point of view.
- explains the challenges involved in access to education because of socio-economic inequalities.
- discusses the role of national policy in breaking gender barriers and myths.

Notes

- examines the role of the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 in addressing gender issues.
- appreciates the contribution of NEP 2020 in dealing with gender issues,

10.1 EDUCATIONAL POLICIES FOR GENDER EQUALITY

As discussed in lesson (Development of women's education in India), women enjoyed almost equal status with men, particularly in the early Vedic period. However, during the medieval period, the condition of women deteriorated under the Muslim rulers in India. Social reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar worked to uplift and empower women.

The Constitution of India makes special provisions for women to enable them to exercise their rights and participate in national development.

The Preamble to the Constitution of India **assures justice, social, economic and political equality of status, opportunity and dignity to the individual**. Thus, it treats both men and women as equals. Some of **the Fundamental Rights** in the Indian Constitution provide for the following special provisions for women-

Article 14 ensures women the right to equality.

Article 15(1) specifically prohibits discrimination based on sex.

Article 15(3) empowers the state to take affirmative actions in favour of women.

Article 16 provides equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office.

Similarly, **the Directive Principles of State Policy** also outline certain specific provisions for women in India:

Article 39 (a) provides that the state should direct its policies towards securing equality for men and women and the right to an adequate means of livelihood.

Article 39 (d) mandates equal pay for equal work for both men and women.

Article 42 provides that the state shall make provisions for securing just and humane work conditions and maternity relief.

Given the long-term nature of issues impacting women in India, there is a need to strengthen the process that promotes the **overall development of women by focusing on a coordinated approach** for implementing schemes of concerned Ministries/Departments and by creating an environment that is conducive to social change.

10.2. CHALLENGES IN ACCESSING EDUCATION DUE TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC INEQUALITIES

Many social and economic factors disrupt access to education in India. First, students in the rural belt of India need better schools and colleges. They lack even the basic infrastructure like furniture or manpower like teachers or well-trained staff. This creates inequality in the level of education offered. It is common to see children drop out of school after primary education. Rural India falls short of secondary or higher secondary schools. In addition, girl children are majorly deprived of education due to the social pressure of marriage or taking care of their younger siblings when their parents are out for work.

Some of the reasons of low access to education are:lack of trained teachers, toilets especially for girls; lack of adequate infrastructure, illiteracy, low access to education, poverty, lack of adequate transport, early marriage and care of siblings which is diagrammatically represented as under:

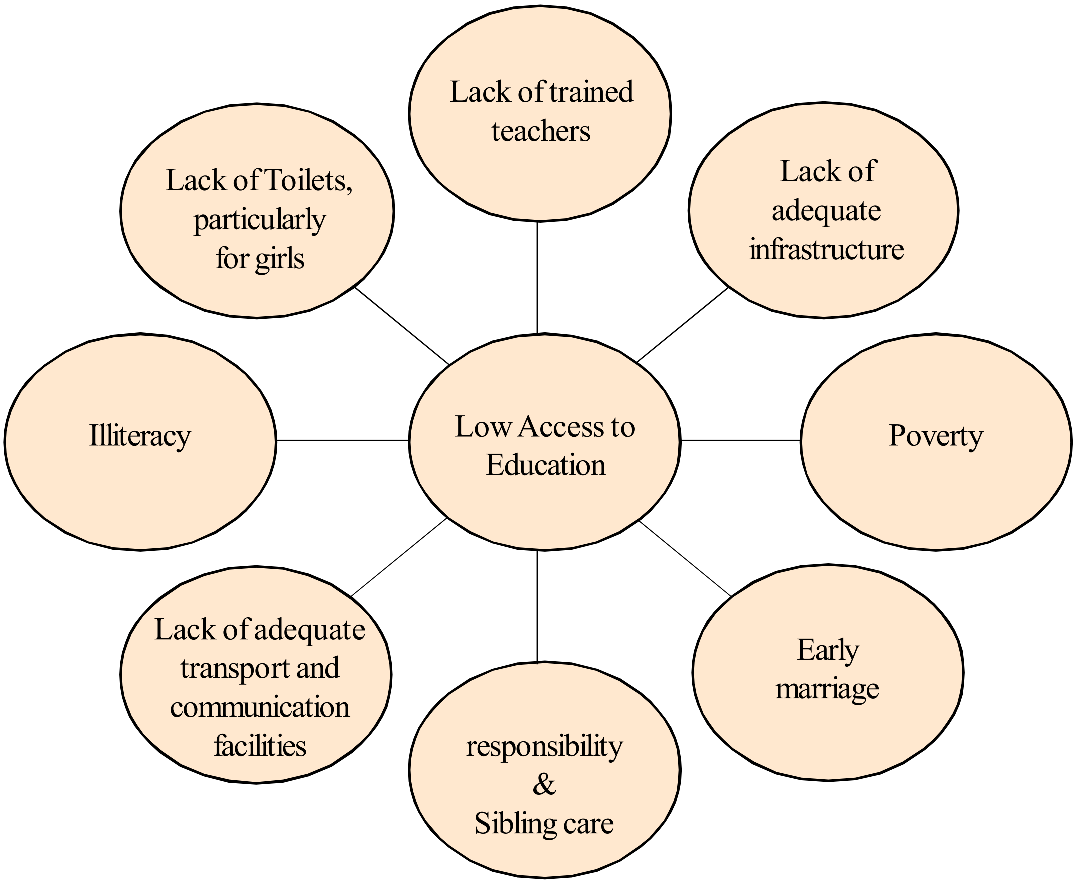


Figure 10.1: Reasons of low access to education

Notes

ACTIVITY 10.1

Now, you might have understood different reasons of low access to education and drop-out. You might have seen boys and girls might not be able to go to school due to different reasons. Write a report citing different reasons of low access to education and drop-out in your area. Also compare how reasons of low access to education and drop-out is different among boys and girls.

National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO), January to June 2014, 71st Round, under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation states that male literacy was 83% against the female literacy rate of 67%. Furthermore, it was found that 4.5% of males, as against 2.2% of females, completed the education level of graduation and above. In urban areas, 17% of males and 13% of females completed graduation.

10.3 ROLE OF NATIONAL POLICY IN BREAKING GENDER BARRIERS

10.3.1 The National Policy of Education (1968)

The National Policy of Education (1968) marked a significant step in the educational arena in post-independent India. The policy focused on a radical reconstruction and expanding educational facilities at all levels in the country.

The acceptance of a standard structure of education all over India and the introduction of the 10+2+3 system by most states has been its most notable development. It laid down a standard scheme of studies for both boys and girls in the school curriculum. Science and mathematics were ideally incorporated as compulsory subjects. In addition, it aimed at restructuring of courses at the Undergraduate level, and the Centre of Advanced Studies for post-graduate education and research were established.

Education was planned to be imparted in a manner that played a positive role in women's empowerment. New values were instilled through curricula, textbooks, training and orientation of teachers, decision-makers and administrators with the active involvement of educational institutions. Women's studies promoted various courses and educational institutions to take up active programmes to further women's development. Removal of women's illiteracy and obstacles inhibiting their access to and retention in elementary education received priority. Provisions were made for special support, services, setting time targets and effective monitoring. A significant emphasis was laid on women's participation in vocational, technical and professional education at different levels. The policy of non-discrimination was pursued to eliminate sex stereotyping in vocational and professional courses. Women's participation in non-traditional occupations and emergent technologies was encouraged.

Notes

The new Policy emphasised the removal of disparities and to equalize educational opportunities. Focus on attending specific needs of women, who have been denied equality so far received importance. Population control could be achieved through the spread of literacy and education among women.

The Constitutional Amendment of 1976 focussed on Education for Quality and a new policy for an equitable Education system. The Five Year Plans focused attention on the development of women. The Committee on Status of Women in India, in 1974, submitted a report which gave a new impetus towards gender perspectives on public expenditure. The National Policy on Education (1986) was adopted during the seventh plan period which focused on providing educational opportunities to women. For the first time in India, the Planning Commission, under the Eighth Five Year Plan (1992-97), highlighted the need to ensure a definite flow of funds from general developmental sectors to that of women.

Further ahead, the Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002) adopted the "Women Component Plan" as one of its major strategies of planning and budgeting. It directed the Central and State Governments to ensure that "not less than 30 percent of the funds/benefits are earmarked to all women's related sectors". It also directed that a special vigil be kept on the flow of earmarked funds/benefits towards empowering women. In addition, the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts of 1992 provided reservations for women in local bodies.

In the following section, government educational policies in concerning the education of girls in India have been included.

10.3.2 The National Policy on Education (1986) revised in 1992

The National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986, as modified in 1992, emphasizes three aspects of elementary education-

- Universal access and enrolment
- Universal retention of children up to14 years of age, and
- A substantial improvement in the quality of education to enable all children to achieve basic levels of learning.

In pursuance of the National Policy of Education (1986) revised in 1992, the main features of the implementation strategy concerning the status of women include-

1. To gear the entire education system to play a positive role in women's empowerment.
2. To encourage educational institutions to take up active programmes to enhance women's status and further women's development in all sectors.

3. To widen women's access to vocational, technical and professional education at all levels by breaking gender stereotypes.

4. To create a dynamic management structure that will respond to the challenge posed by this mandate.

Strategies outlined below deal primarily with operational details regarding the implementation of the POA (1992):

1. All the Bureaus of the Department of Education will prepare a concrete action plan addressing gender-related issues and concerns in their specific work area by August 1993. Relevant nodal institutions like the UGC, AICTE, ICSSR, ICAR, ICMR, IAMR, State Boards, Vocational Education Bureau, etc. to prepare similar action plans.

2. A monitoring unit will be created in the Planning Division of the Department of Education to ensure the integration of gender issues into policies, programmes and schemes. This unit will develop indicators for monitoring implementation, ensure effective dissemination of information and coordinate action. This will be done by August 1993.

3. Similar monitoring Units/Bureaus will be set up at the State Level.

4. Annual Reports of all the bureaus and institutions will spell out the steps they have undertaken.

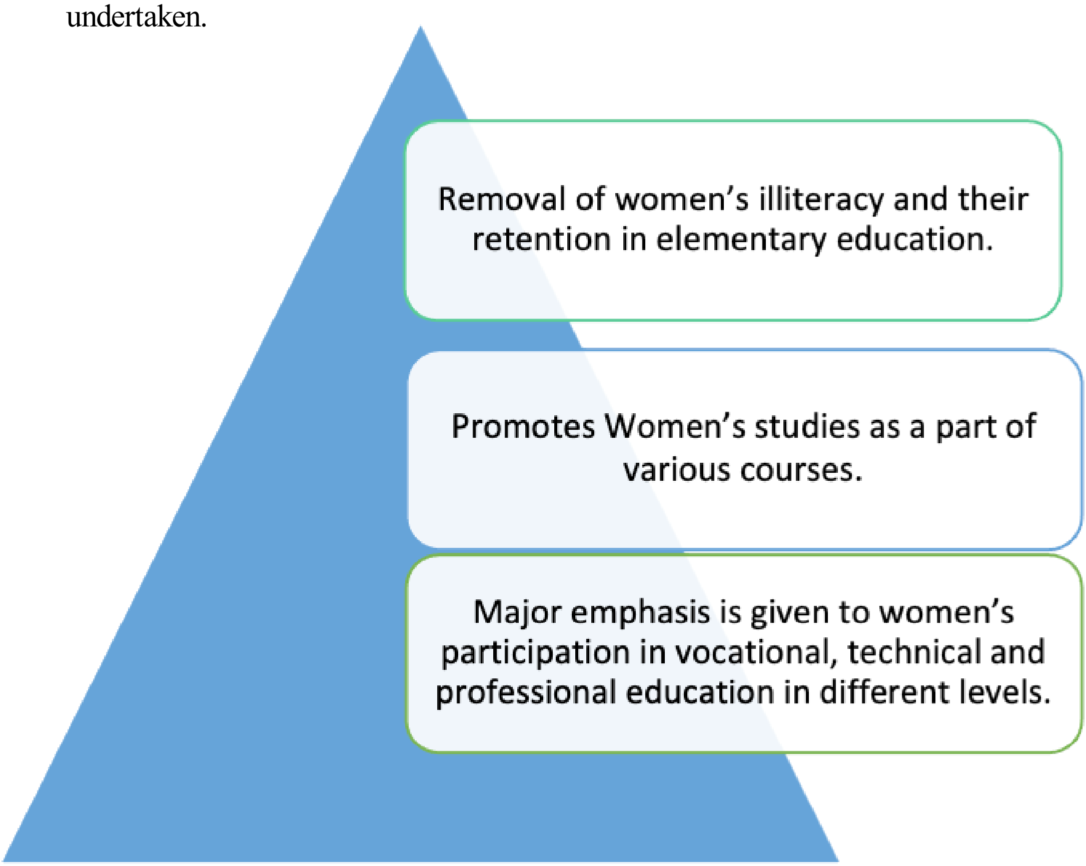


Figure: 10.2. Focus areas of NEP, 1986 and Gender Equality

Notes

Equity and social justice in education can be attained by including Women's Equality as a vital component of its overall strategy. The National Policy on Education (1986), revised in 1992, emphasized the provision of special support services and prevents the discrimination of women at all levels of education. The Programme of Action (POA), 1992, spells out actions to be taken to promote education for women's equality. It should be incumbent on all actors, agencies and institutions in the field of education at all levels to be gender sensitive and ensure that women have their rightful share in all educational programmes and activities.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 10.1

1. The National Policy of Education was revised in the year ________________.

2. A gender ________________ society ensures that women have their rightful share in all educational programmes and activities.

3. The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts of 1992 gave reservation to women in ____________________.

4. The universal retention of children up to________________ years of age was emphasized in the National Policy of Education,1986.

10.3.3.National Policy for the Empowerment of Women, 2001

The Government of India adopted the **National Policy for Empowerment of Women in 2001** with the objective of bringing about advancement, development and empowerment of women and eliminating all forms of discrimination against women. It was directed towards achieving inclusive growth with the special focus on the social empowerment of women.

The goal of this policy is to create an environment for women to realise their full potential and have equal access of women and girls to participation and decision-making. Accordingly, special measures to eliminate discrimination, universalize education, eradicate illiteracy; create a gender-sensitive educational system, increase enrolment and retention rates of girls and improve the quality of education to facilitate life-long learning, as well as the development of occupation/vocation/technical skills by women, was facilitated. In addition, reducing the gender gap in secondary and higher education would be a focus area.

Support Services-The provision of support services to women, like child care facilities, including crèches at workplaces and educational institutions, and homes for the aged and the disabled. will be expanded and improved to create an enabling environment and to ensure their full cooperation in social, political and economic life. Women-friendly personnel policies will also be drawn up to encourage women to participate effectively in all developmental processes.

Sakshar Bharat /National Literacy Mission

Historically, various factors are responsible for poor literacy rates of females, such as gender-based inequality, social discrimination and economic exploitation, occupation of girl child in domestic chores, low enrolment of girls in schools, and low retention rate and high dropout rate etc. Therefore, the main strategies adopted by the Government for increasing female literacy in the country include imparting Functional Literacy, Universalization for Elementary Education and Non-Formal Education. In addition, the National Literacy Mission (NLM) or Sakshar Bharat Mission, with its objective of extending educational options to those adults who have no access to formal education, targeted female literacy as a critical instrument for women's empowerment. Now, National Literacy Mission (NLM), as revised Sakhshar Bharat focuses on Women and Backward Communities like SCs, STs, OBCs, Minorities, etc., as its core target groups.

10.3.4. Draft of National Policy for Women, 2016

The mission of this policy was to create a practical framework to enable the development of policies, programmes and practices to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women in the family, community, workplace and governance. This draft policy aims to strengthen Aanganwadi Centres and make efforts to improve access to pre-primary education for girl children. It also aims to identify the significant constraints preventing women from accessing higher education and developing innovative and accessible educational systems.

The draft policy also aimed to enhance and uphold the respect for women and empower women. The policy also aimed to reduce the maternal and prenatal mortality rate, provide transport facilities for girls so that they can reach schools, and ensure their security and other rights.

Key features of the Draft National Policy for Women, 2016

A new National Policy for Women Empowerment was unveiled in August 2016. The salient features of the policy are given below. The National Policy for Women, 2016 aimed to:

- to create a society with women working as equal partners in all spheres of life.
- to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women.
- to make cyberspace a safe place for women.
- to give priority to the health and education of women
- to improve access to pre-primary education, enrichment and retention of adolescent girls.
- to carry skill development and provide equal employment opportunities.

- to save girls and women from all forms of violence and ensure safety for girls/women.

10.4. NCF, 2005 IN ADDRESSING GENDER ISSUES

In Baroda, Class VII students have penned a poem reflecting the social roles assigned to men and women.

In my textbooks, I learned that only men are kings and soldiers,

Till I read a book in which famous queens ruled and fought against enemies.

In my textbooks, I learned that only men are doctors

I went to a doctor, I saw that she was a woman

In my textbooks, I learned that only men do farming in my country, until, on a train journey I saw women working in the fields

I have learned that I have a lot to learn by seeing.

National surveys and data like (NSSO 1995-96) cited in Government of India, 2002) showed that nine out of every ten girls enrolled in schools could not complete schooling, and 14 out of every 100 girls enrolled in Class l reach Class 12 in urban areas.

The National Focus Group covered various significant areas of the National Curriculum Framework 2005. The National Focus Group on Gender Issues in Education devoted itself entirely to the issue of gender. Gender was a significant area in the current curriculum review process. Gender, it was believed, cuts across all disciplines and was essential to the construction of knowledge. It has substantial implications for human relations in general and education in particular.

The focus group initially made two recommendations:

1. **Access to education for All Girls-** Free and quality education for all and provision of accessible schools for girls in every area of the country to ensure that girls have equal access to education.

2. **Quality of Girls' Education** – The quality of education in Government schools has increasingly become a subject of concern for the marginalized sections of society, especially girls, which in turn is related to the high dropout rates of girls. Hence, the infrastructure and quality of teaching in government schools must be brought up to the mark.

Another important recommendation includes the need to integrate the input from Women's Studies Research in Textbooks, Syllabi and Training.

The NCERT and SCERTs in each state should develop formal linkages with centres and schools of women's studies in universities. Joint programmes by NCERT and SCERTs should be set up to draw inputs from research on women's studies. Such efforts will result in developing teaching learning materials in a critical and proactive approach towards gender for textbooks at the primary, middle and secondary levels. Women's Studies academics and researchers should also be invited to shape the formation of syllabi, content of different disciplines and teacher training programmes.

The Focus Group Project bifurcated the sections on "Gender Issues in Education: Contexts and Concerns" and "Towards a Project of Possibility". The first section on "Contexts and Concerns" addresses how schooling reinforces gendered inequality in socialisation and social control. Norms relating to masculinity and feminity continue to be traditionally imbibed and practised (like boys are allowed to go to school while girls sweep and clean at home). Contexts of caste, class, religion, and the rural-urban divide impact girls and how they are socially constructed.

In the second section, "Towards a Project of Possibility", the successful implementation of gender policy, requires a dynamic shift in approach. Therefore, notions of "equality", "empowerment", "masculinity", and "gender" have to be understood from a critical perspective.

It emphasises school reforms that stress 'character development'. "Stereotyping" exists in a particular culture. For example, boys are discouraged from being emotional or gentle, weak or fearful. They are given the role of breadwinners, protectors and warriors. To get a gender-just society, empowerment in education promotes a positive self-image, stimulates critical thinking and develops an understanding of the structures of hegemonic power that prevents the creation of a gender-just society.

10.5. GENDER AND THE NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL POLICY 2020

The NEP 2020 has come up with the following proposal as part of its policy initiatives highlighting the importance of education for girls.

The NEP 2020 has geared its policy towards ensuring quality education so that students, especially girls, are interested in attending school. NEP 2020 aims to expand and strengthen the learning needs of young people in India. Open and Distance Learning (ODL) and the National Institutes of Open Schooling prioritise those who cannot attend a physical school. Efforts are directed towards creating a safe, all-inclusive, effective learning environment so that children of all genders are comfortable and inspired to teach and learn in their schools.

These provisions include working toilets, clean drinking water, clean spaces, computers, internet, libraries, sports and recreational facilities, etc. According to statistical data (e.g., data provided by DISE-2016-17), there is a steep decline in the enrolment of female students at the primary and higher secondary levels.

The Govt. of India plans to constitute a Gender Inclusive Fund" for capacity building to provide equitable quality education for all girls'/transgender students. These funds (NEP, 2020) "will enable states to support and scale effective community-based interventions to address problems within local contexts that tend to create specific barriers to female and transgender students access to and participation in education. The Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas will ensure that girls from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds participate in quality schools (up to Grade 12). Gender sensitization will be a part of all teacher education programmes at the primary, secondary, tertiary and higher education levels.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 10.2

1. Explain the recommendation mentioned in NCF-2005 with regard to access to education for girls.

2. Describe the purpose of Gender Inclusion Fund as envisaged in NEP, 2020.

WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

- The Constitution of India makes special provisions for women to enable them to exercise their rights and participate in national development. It treats both men and women as equals.

- Many social and economic factors disrupt access to education in India. The students in the rural parts of the country need better schools and colleges. They lack infrastructure like furniture or manpower like teachers or well-trained staff. This creates inequality in the level of education offered.

- Rural children tend to drop out of school after primary education because of fewer number of secondary and higher secondary schools. Girl children are majorly deprived of education due to the social pressure of marriage or taking care of their younger siblings when their parents are out for work.

- The National Policy of Education (1968) marked a significant step towards reconstruction and expanding educational facilities at all levels in the country. The acceptance of a

Notes

standard structure of education all over India and the introduction of the 10+2+3 system by most states has been its most notable development.

l Science and mathematics were incorporated as compulsory subjects. It promoted various courses and educational institutions to further women's development. A significant emphasis was laid on women's participation in vocational, technical and professional education at different levels. Women's participation in non-traditional occupations and emergent technologies was encouraged. The National Policy on Education (1986) focused on providing educational opportunities to women.

- The National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986, as modified in 1992, emphasized on three aspects of elementary education, that is universal access and enrolment, universal retention of children up to14 years of age, and a substantial improvement in the quality of education to enable all children to achieve basic levels of learning.

- The Government of India adopted the **National Policy for Empowerment of Women in 2001** with the objective of bringing about advancement, development and empowerment of women and eliminating all forms of discrimination against women. It was directed towards achieving inclusive growth with the special focus on the social empowerment of women. The National Policy for Women, 2016 aimed to create a society with women working as equal partners in all spheres of life to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women.

- The NEP 2020 is aimed at ensuring quality education. It aims to expand and strengthen the learning needs of young people in India. Open and Distance Learning (ODL) and the National Institutes of Open Schooling prioritise those who cannot attend a physical school. Efforts are directed towards creating a safe, all-inclusive, effective learning environment so that children of all genders are comfortable and inspired to teach and learn in their schools. These provisions include working toilets, clean drinking water, clean spaces, computers, internet, libraries, sports and recreational facilities, etc.

TERMINAL EXERCISE

1. Discuss the NCF 2005 in relation to addressing issues of gender.

2. Write a brief note on the NPE 1968 and its focus on the breaking the gender barriers.

3. Describe the main highlights of the National Policy for Women 2016.

4. Highlight the socio-economic inequalities that create barriers to accessing education in India.

5. List the measures taken by the government to prevent violence against women.

6. Highlight the major recommendations made by Focus Group in NCF 2005.

Notes

GLOSSARY:

Access to Education: A learning environment that is safe enough to allow learning to take place, and opportunities to learn that are equitably distributed.

Gender: Differences between men and women as created by society.

Gender Equality: Equal treatment of men and women in all societies.

Gender Discrimination: Differential treatment of men and women.

Women Empowerment: The power to make choices, take independent decisions and freedom from violence against women.

Equitable: Impartial, fair and unbiased treatment.

Rehabilitation: Restoring a person's health or everyday life through training, therapy and treatment.

Hegemony: Cultural leadership exercised by the ruling class.

ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

10.1

1. 1992
2. sensitive
3. local bodies
4. 14 years

Notes

10.2

1. Free and quality education for all and provision of accessible schools for girls in every area of the country to ensure that girls have equal access to education.

2. Gender Inclusion fund "will enable states to support and scale effective community-based interventions to address problems within local contexts that tend to create specific barriers to female and transgender students access to and participation in education

11

SCHEMES AND PROGRAMMES FOR GENDER EQUALITY

Education offers an opportunity to work towards making the society inclusive and free from gender biases, stereotypes, and discriminations. School is the highly trusted institution after family to impart values for family life and citizenship. Another important area of contribution of Education in nation building is promotion of gender equality.

There are various schemes and policies that talk about the promotion of girls' education eventually to work towards achieving gender equality. Policies like national policy on education 1986, Plan of action 1991, National education policy 2020 and other extensively talk about girls' education with the larger aim to dismiss all kinds of stereotypes about women, their capabilities, contribution, and ability to achieve the set goals. Guided by this policy there are many government schemes that make education accessible and viable to all. NGO also have their role to play in promoting equal education to all. This lesson is dedicated to explore the present and previous schemes and programmes promoting gender equality to understand how these policies helped in bringing gender equity and empowerment. Gender diversity is the core line of understanding gender. This lesson will largely focus on the role of government schemes and progammes and role of non-government organization in promoting education and gender equality.

OUTCOMES

After studying this lesson, learner:

- describes the salient features of the schemes and programs of government of India for education like Samagra Siksh Abhiyaan (SMSA), Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs & NPGEL) & Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyaan (RMSA) towards gender equality;
- appreciates the role of open schooling (Particularly NIOS) in leveraging education of girls and women.

Notes

- recognizes the role of NGOs in promoting education of women, minorities and other marginalized section;

11.1 UNDERSTANDING GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES IN PROMOTING EDUCATION AND GENDER EQUALITY

State has a specific and significant role to play in making education accessible, available and approachable to all. To achieve this larger aim government makes various policies, schemes, programmes and laws. These initiatives are taken to promote gender equality at larger level. The Sustainable Development Goals (2015) of United Nation also accepted and recognized that 'gender equality is inextricably linked to the right to education.' This aim incorporates commitment toward ensuring the quality and equitable education for all without any form of discrimination based on any gender. There are many obstacles in policy formation and its implementation due to social, cultural and economic barriers and people's mind sets. These all collectively create exclusion and inequality in education based on gender. On the other hand, it is also important to note that government in India is committed to create opportunities to make society equal.

In India, despite the fact that we have right to education as our fundamental right under the Article 21 (a) of Indian constitution, children are easily visible outside schools for doing various kinds of work as labour. Many girls are still out of school and the situation is worse for transgenders. Women have been discriminated against education, work and carrier choices. Stereotypes in curriculum, textbooks and pedagogy, ideological barriers of male dominance in various academic and professional fields prevent women from exercising available rights to achieve equal status in society. NEP 2020 has also provided special attention to equitable education for all genders.

Various initiatives have been taken by government to promote gender equality in all sphere of life that includes social and educational equality, economic empowerment, and political participation and so on. Some of such schemes are being discussed in the next section of the chapter.

11.1.1 Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan

Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan is a government initiative launched by then Indian Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India (now Ministry of Education) in 2018. The program aims to provide quality education and enhance learning outcomes for all school-going children in India, from pre-school to higher secondary levels.

Under the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan, the government has merged three previously separate schemes - Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA), and Teacher Education (TE) - into a single, integrated scheme. The objective is to ensure a holistic approach to education and to address the shortcomings of the earlier schemes.

Some of the key components of the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan include the provision of infrastructure and facilities in schools, the improvement of teaching and learning processes, the enhancement of teacher education, the promotion of vocational education, and the inclusion of children from disadvantaged backgrounds. The program also aims to improve the education system's governance and management structures, and to strengthen the capacity of education administrators and teachers.

The SMSA recognizes the importance of educating girls in achieving gender equality and social development. The program focuses on promoting the enrollment of girls in schools, providing them with access to quality education, and ensuring their retention in schools. The SMSA has been instrumental in promoting the education of girls in India in several ways:

Promoting enrollment: SMSA has launched several initiatives to promote the enrollment of girls in schools, including setting up residential schools for girls in rural areas, providing free textbooks and uniforms to girls, offering scholarships and stipends to economically disadvantaged families to support their education and provision of Stipend to CWSN girls from class I to Class XII

Improving infrastructure: SMSA has made significant investments in improving the infrastructure of schools, including the construction of new classrooms, toilets, and boundary walls. This has led to the creation of a more conducive learning environment for girls, which has helped in promoting their education.

Providing training and support: SMSA has provided training and support to teachers to help them create a gender-sensitive learning environment in schools. The program has also provided training to community members to raise awareness about the importance of girls' education and to promote their enrollment in schools.

Empowering girls: SMSA has launched several initiatives to empower girls and enable them to become self-reliant. This includes vocational training programs, life skills training, career guidance programs and provision for self-defense training for the girls from classes VI to XII

In a nutshell, SMSA has played a significant role in promoting the education of girls in India by addressing the various barriers that hinder their access to education. The program has contributed to increasing the enrollment of girls in schools, improving their learning outcomes, and promoting their overall development.

11.1.2 Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA): An Overview

Education works as a tool for the development of the nation. In this context, primary education plays a very vital and significant role to overcome the basic deprivations and secondary education works towards social and economic development which supports incorporates social justice and equality.

To improve the quality of education for all, various recommendations were given by Education Policy 1986 and plan of action 1992. These recommendation were related to opening girls' hostels, integration of ICTs in schools, vocational education etc. to make school education accessible and approachable to all for quality education in India. RMSA was one of the schemes in this process under SSA (Sarva Sikshah Abhiyaan).

RMSA was launched to increase the enrolment in schools while considering the distance of school from residence of the child.

Objectives of the RMSA

There are various objectives with which RMSA was launched. Some of them are given here:

- To enhance enrolment ratio in schools up to 75% which was 52.26 % for class 9th and 10th. This enrolment was expected to be achieved within 5 years of the implementation of the scheme.
- It aimed to enhance the quality of education which is the prime responsibility of secondary school education.
- It aimed to make school education free from all kinds of obstacles and barriers based on gender, socio-cultural and economic, and disability.
- It aimed to provide universal access to education particularly at secondary level of school education, including secondary schools within five kilometers and senior secondary school within 7-10 kilometers.
- It also aimed to arrange effective and useable transport facilities along with residential spaces as per the need of children.
- It also aimed to work towards enrolment of the girl children in secondary schools and to reduce the dropouts of the girls.
- It aimed to provide access to secondary education to children from economically weaker section, and those from educationally deprived family backgrounds including other marginalized section such as SC/ST/OBC etc. In all, to achieve universalization of secondary education. There has been a special emphasis on promoting education of girls to ensure that they do not drop out of schools due to familial work demands.

ACTIVITY 11.1

Examine the achievement of RMSA against each point given in table

Notes

RMSA aimed to	To what extended it has been achieved
1. Achieve improved and enhanced enrolment ratio in schools up to 75% which was 52.26 % for class 9th and 10th within 5 years of its implementation.	
2. Achieve the target of opening new schools so as to provide secondary schools within 5 kilometers and senior secondary school within 7-10 kilometers.	
3. Arrange effective and useable transport facilities along with residential spaces as per the needs of children and the context.	

Many additional provisions were made under this scheme for enhancing the quality, accessibility and retention of student particularly girl child in school. Some of such provisions are discussed here:

- **Additional classrooms:** Considering that due to this scheme more students will be enrolled and hence more seating space would be required. To make appropriate provision to accommodate newly admitted students, provision for developing additional classrooms wherever needed was approved.
- **Laboratories:** Laboratories are essential for schools. These can be of various kinds. So, to enhance the quality of education, teaching learning process and providing better hands on experiences provision of developing more laboratories was accepted.
- **Libraries:** Books are the core of education. Reading books enhance our ability to comprehend. Considering reading important and understanding the values of collection of books provision was made to develop more libraries in schools.
- **Art and Craft:** Considering the important relation of art and craft and education, special provisions are made to develop art and craft room in school.
- **Toilet Block:** A child spends almost 6 hours in school every day. Therefore essential facilities are required in school. One of them is clean and hygienic toilets. Separate toilet blocks are accepted to be built in schools for girls to avoid any kind of discomfort.
- **Drinking Water:** A special emphasis was given on developing facilities of clean drinking water in schools.
- **Residential hostels for teacher in remote areas.** There are schools located in remote areas but near to students' residence, but away from teachers' homes.

Notes

Considering this point in mind provisions are made to build residential hostels for teachers in schools located in remote areas.

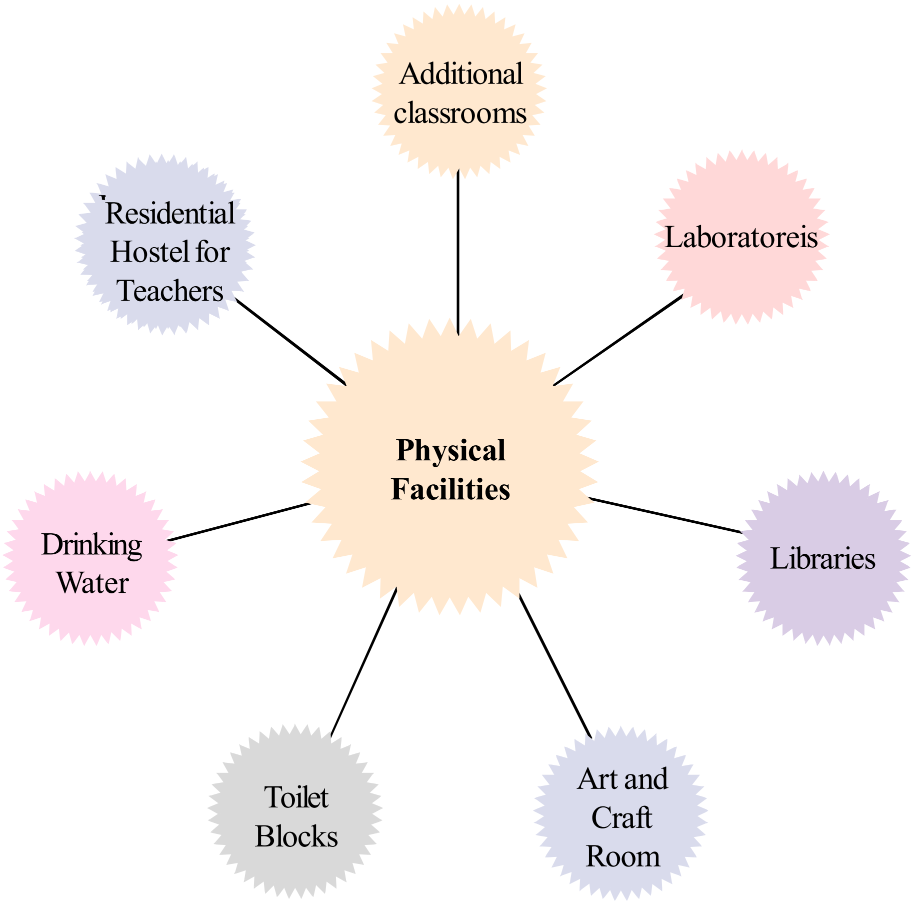


Figure 11.1: Focus on Physical Facilities under RMSA

Intervention to enhance the quality of education

Various interventions were placed by RMSA to enhance the quality of education for all. Some of them are given here:

- **Teachers' Appointment:** Lack of teachers in school has been an important problem which eventually put pressure on existing staff and that leads to poor engagement with learners. It negatively affects the quality of education. 1:30 ratio is considered ideal for teaching. To achieve this ratio provisions are made to recruit additional teachers in schools.

- **Academic Focus:** For developing scientific aptitude and thinking in students, Science and Mathematics were given special attention in school education. Along with this, English language was also promoted to meet the international standards. To promote science special science laboratories were developed in schools.

Notes

- **Teacher Education:** School education is directly related to teacher education, which make it necessary to do required reforms in teacher education to make school education better. It was suggested that teacher education must cater to the needs of the time and prepare teachers who can address the school concerns.

- **ICT and Education:** Considering the emerging need of ICTs in life, ICT enabled education was promoted and today one can see the role being played by ICTs in our life. This intervention was also important to develop quality education for matching the standards at the international level.

- **Reforms in Curriculum:** To enhance the quality of education curriculum reforms were suggested to make the content more critical and contemporary and application centered.

- **Pedagogical Reforms:** It was considered that rote learning does not serve the purpose of education therefore opportunities should be provided for contextual and meaningful learning.

Interventions to Promote Equity in Education

Creating equal spaces and providing equal opportunities to all has always been an important aim of different educational policies. RMSA has also contributed to the same. Some of the interventions for promoting equity in education are given here:

Focused Micro Planning: It was considered important that the broad changes are important but focusing on micro issues in schools is also essential to enhance the possibility of creating equal space for all. It is essential to focus on micro systems in school education which somehow reduce the possibility of equity in various spheres of school life. So, planning was done regarding small but crucial and earlier ignored issues in school education such as toilets and female teachers etc.

New school in special zones: Provisions were made to open new schools considering SC/ST/Minority area in focus. These schools opened new possibilities of education for all.

Enrolment Drive: Despite the fact that there are schools but enrolment is very poor, prevision of special drives were placed for the enrolment of the students of weaker sections. This provision was also made to make education available to all. This was one of the most import interventions through RMSA.

More Female Teachers: The provisions were made to appoint more female teachers in school to attract the girl child to attend school. It was considered that parents will feel safer while sending their girl children to school. Special focus on recruitment of female teachers was also a great initiative for two basic reasons, it created teaching opportunities for women and enhanced the enrolment of girls in school.

Notes

Separate Toilet Blocks: Though toilet blocks have already been discussed under physical facilities, but its mention here is also important as it was an essentially required intervention on the idea of equity. Special toilet blocks were made for girls that addressed their essential need.

ACTIVITY 11.2

Many suggestions were given by RMSA to enhance the quality and equity in education. If you were asked to add three more in each, what would they be like?

Add to enhance the quality	Add to enhance the equity
1.	
2.	
3.	

11.1.2 National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL)

NPEGEL (National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level) is one of the various initiatives taken by government for providing better opportunities to girls to be educated under SSA. This programme was introduced to make education available for girls from places which are hard to reach. Its focus was to attend girls those were not in school. This programme was launched in 2003 as one of the significant component of SSA. Its objective was to provide additional support for educational access to girls.

It is important to note that the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan was launched in the year 2001-2003 for universalization of elementary education in India. The effort was to provide education to all without any discrimination. The objective was also to enhance the capability of the children via education. There were fewer provisions for supporting girls' education and hence NPEGEL was introduced to provide maximum support to girls' education.

The prime objective of NPEGEL was to develop cluster wise model schools to have better community engagement and connect for enhancing the enrolment of girls in schools. The taken task was to provide all possible support to girls' education that includes teachers' sensitization towards gender concerns, no discrimination based on gender neither conscious nor unconscious, gender sensitive curriculum and study materials and other support to make educational access and retention convenient for girls such as books, uniform etc.

Considering the poor level of women literacy in rural areas, this scheme was implemented in identified educationally backward blocks. These blocks were identified with reference to the

Notes

rate of literacy of the block as compared to the National literacy levels. There were also district where literacy was below 10%. These areas were also considered for intervention.

This programme was introduced in 24 states in India, these were Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Karnataka, Jammu & Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Uttaranchal, Meghalaya, West Bengal, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Assam and one UT of Dadra & Nagar Haveli.

The Strategy adopted was to include community, school teacher, non-governmental organization, etc. to elevate the process of girls' education. It tried to make it community owned process and local participation is valued. All the identified blocks were expected to assess the ground situation and take action. The criteria included out of school girls, dropout girls, working girls, those who have completed primary education, girls of marginalized communities etc. According to the need and context, actions were expected to be taken. In all existing practices and material including pedagogy was reviewed in light of gender sensitivity for providing better educational opportunity to all girls.

NPEGEL was expected to develop a dynamic management structure to promote girls education at district, state and national level. Various programmes were expected to be developed to create awareness about gender concerns among various stake holders in education system including parents, administrator, and teachers and so on. The idea was to eliminate all kinds of gender disparities of, for and in education for girls. To develop gender sensitive perspective in education, special collaborative networking among various kinds of institutions (academic, research, administration etc.) were taken up. It also made effort to arrange necessary and significant support services to enhance participation of girls in elementary education.

ACTIVITY 11.3

Suggest three ways to make provisions of NPEGEL more effective for enhancing the girls' education in India. 1. 2. 3.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 11.1

Put a tick (✓) mark against the correct options:

1. Why are the following provisions important in a school? Give answer in one line.

   (a) Laboratory

Notes

(b) Library

2. NPEGEL was launched to

(a) Provide support to girls' education

(b) Provide support to education for all

(c) Develop more schools based on the idea of neighborhood schools

(d) Capacity building of the school teachers

3. What was the criterion for selecting the intervention zones under NPEGEL?

11.1.3 Mahila Samakhya Programme

This programme was introduced in 1988 to achieve the objectives of the National Policy on Education 1986. The National policy on Education 1986 stated that education can be an effective and meaningful tool to empower women's agency and status in India.

"Education will be used as an agent of basic change in the status of woman. In order to neutralize the accumulated distortions of the past, there will be a well-conceived edge in favor of women. The national education system will play a positive, interventionist role in the empowerment of women." – NPE-1986

The core focus of Mahila Samakhya was to empower women through education and awareness. Mahila Samakhya developed a collective space (Sangha) for women to discuss important issues of their lives. Trained field facilitators were also provided to rural women to help them to acquire decision making and leadership abilities. Under this programme few alternative structures like Nari Adalats, Counselling Centres, Sanjeevani Kendras/Herbal Medicine and information centers were also developed for women. This programme alone trained over six lakh women in various areas. 101 mahila shikshan kendras was also established under Mahila Samakhya programme. These shikshan kendras effectively provided quality and gender sensitive education to adolescent out of school girls.

11.1.4 Balika Samridhi Yojana

It was introduced by government of India in 1997. Under this scheme government offered financial aid to all girl children born after 15 August 1997. This scheme was especially introduced to provide support to girls of economically weaker section of both rural and urban areas.

The fundamental objectives of this scheme are to change the attitude of society towards the birth of a girl child and also the mother of a girl child. This scheme also designed to facilitate in improving the enrollment and retention of girls in primary and secondary schools.

Notes

Two daughters from a family are eligible to avail the benefits. Financial assistance under Balika Samridhi Yojana is provided in two installments. The first installment of the financial grant is provided at the time of the birth of eligible girl child as Rs. 500 to her mother. Another installment of funds is provided at many stages of her education. It is an annual financial assistance which is divided into 6 major categories – Class 1 to Class 3 – 300 per annum , class 4 – Rs. 500 per annum , Class 5 – Rs. 600 per annum, Class 6 and Class 7 – Rs. 700 per annum, Class 8 – Rs. 800 per annum and class 9 and class 10 – Rs. 1000 per annum.

In addition, a vital characteristic of the scheme was to take care of the girls till the legal age of their marriage. This scheme also tried to provide meaningful assistance to girls in their involvement in income generating activities so that they can become financially independent.

11.1.5 KGBVs

Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBVs) was introduced by government of India in 2004. This Scheme is about setting up residential schools at upper primary level for girls belong to disadvantaged sections of the educationally backward blocks (EBBs) in the country. Educationally backward blocks are the regions where female rural literacy is below national average and the gender gap in literacy is above the national average. This scheme provided 75% reservation for SC, ST, OBC and Minority communities.

In 2007 KGBVs programme was merged with SSA as a separate component. Now KGBV scheme falls under Samagra Shiksha Abhiyaan since the year 2018.

The prime objective of KGBVs is to provide quality education to the girls of the socially and economically marginalized sections of the society. It introduced for bridging gender and social category gaps at all levels of schooling. This programme encouraged the participation of girls in education by providing them appropriate opportunities. This is a residential schooling programme so it aims resolve many issues of girls drop outs like security, sanitation, nutrition etc.

This programme was implemented by states through the Mahila Samakhya (MS) society in MS States (Karnataka, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Bihar, Assam, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh and Uttrakhand). It was introduced in other states through SSA Society.

Training of residential school teachers was also initiated under this scheme. District Institutes of Educational Training, Block Resource Centers and Mahila Samakhya Resource Groups played important role in this regard.

11.2 ROLE OF OPEN SCHOOLING (PARTICULARLY NIOS) IN LEVERAGING EDUCATION OF WOMEN

Open and distance learning (ODL)- and more particularly, open schooling-has been seen as having greater potential to provide education to those who are deprived and excluded. Women

Notes

are considered a major segment of population who can largely benefited from the ODL system as there are unique flexibilities in terms of time, pace and anywhere learning involved in it. Further, cost involved in ODL system is also less than formal education system. Thus, open schooling is a boon for many girls and women, who are unable to access education, and those who often drop out due to multiple domestic, community and social factors. In India, the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) at the national level, and various state open schools at the state level. Here, you will know some of the unique interventions by NIOS in leveraging education of girls and women.

The National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) was established in 1989 by the Ministry of Education (MOE) Government of India to provide Vocational, Life Enrichment and community-oriented courses, as well as Elementary level Courses through its Open Basic Education Programmes (OBE). It aims to reach a large number of learners, especially for the underprivileged, providing them with unique facilities such as rural youth, urban poor, girls and women, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, backward classes, Divyangjan, and ex-service personnel.

NIOS intervened through many unique initiatives including Second Chance Education (SCE), "Tejaswini: Socio-Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and Young Women Project" and Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBV) scheme for education of girls in remote areas:

- **The Second Chance Education (SCE) Project,** run by NIOS with the support of UN Women, is a programme that seeks to re-integrate women and girls from marginalised communities into formal education. It is being implemented in 12 districts across 4 states (Bihar, Maharashtra, Odisha and Rajasthan) in India, covering approximately 200 villages. The SCE programme offers vocational education, entrepreneurship, digital, and professional training and skills, and finds potential employment. The major outcome of the programme is that 87 percent of women belonging to various marginalised groups such as SC, ST, OBCand minority groups are benefited from this project.
- **"Tejaswini: Socio-Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and Young Women Project".** NIOS in collaboration with the Jharkhand Women Development Society (JWDS), Government of Jharkhand is implementing World Bank's Project "Tejaswini" that seeks to empower the adolescent girls, and young women in the age group of 14-24 those who drop-out from school with basic life skills and thereafter provide further opportunities to acquire market driven skill training or completion of secondary education. The project has three main components: expanding social, educational, and economic opportunities; intensive service delivery; and state capacity-building and implementation support. The project is being implemented in 17 districts

of Jharkhand A model centre has been established at Ranchi and staff has been appointed specifically for the purpose. Time to time capacity building workshop are also held to train the functionaries to adequately train the adolscent girls in content enrichment and developing their life skills.

- **Vocational training in girls' schools.** The Kasturba GnadhiBalika Vidyalayas (KGBV) scheme was launched by the Government of India in 2004 to set up residential schools for girls belonging predominantly to the SC/ST/OBC and minority communities in India's "Educationally Backward Blocks". A hundred and fifty KGBVs in Rajasthan from 33 districts became NIOS study centres and have been offering skills-based vocational courses to girls since 2010. Two skill development courses were chosen: cutting and tailoring and beauty culture. The students are usually aged 12-16 and the training provided an opportunity for them to become productive workforce and enhance their chances of having a dignified livelihood. Collaboration between NIOS and the KGBVs for vocational training was considered a good practice, but it runs the risk of reinforcing gender stereotypes through the course it offers.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 11.2

1. What was the core focus of Mahila Samakhya Programme?
2. Various collective spaces were developed under Mahila Samakhya programme. These collective spaces are known as:
   (a) Council
   (b) SalhaKenderas
   (c) Sangha
   (d) Facilitation centre
3. State any two objectives of Balika Samaridhi Yojana.
4. KGBV is merged with which of the following programme since 2018?
   (a) NPEGEL
   (b) Mahila Samakhya
   (c) SSA
   (d) Samagra Shiksha Abhiyaan.
5. In which of the following states, Tejaswini project is being implemented to improve the education of adolescent girls and women
   a. Rajasthan

Notes

b. Jharkhand

c. Chhattisgarh

d. Odisha

6. Evaluate the potential of open schooling for education of women, particularly for marginalized group.

11.2 ROLE OF NGOs IN PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Along with various government initiatives different NGOs have also contributed in promoting gender equality. These organizations do not come directly under government but can seek for financial support with laid processes. Their contribution in eliminating gender inequality is noticeable. The prime objective of NGOs is to work against the deprivation of the people and provide them required support. NGOs are engaged in various kind of work to promote gender equality in society and making women empowered. Some of these works are:

- Educational support to rural women
- Organizing rural women to participate in the process of their own empowerment
- Development of different mechanisms for promoting gender equality
- Develop self-motivation in women for attaining education and economic contribution
- Ensuring women empowerment via their participation in economic activities
- Maximum use of available resources in favor of developing equal spaces for women
- Developing spaces for women leadership in rural context
- Training programmes for women to enhance their capabilities

Successful Strategies of NGOs

No doubt in the fact that various funding agencies are now favoring gender equity. It also means funding are provided to the NGOs working towards empowerment of women. NGOs provide gender perspective as they are doing lot of work in the field of women's empowerment. Some of them have long term objectives to contribute in empowerment of women in India. It is important to note that the strategies are adopted and used according to the vision, resources, organizational structures, funding etc. of the NGOs.

Education has power of empowering and therefore, lack of education certainly hinders the access of rights and recourse to women and this leads to their poor socio-economic empowerment. Considering this situation, some NGOs offer different facilitation programmes to provide basic literacy and also provide expert knowledge about certain fields. Advocacy

and legal support/facilitation is also one of the important take ups of NGOs for promoting gender equity. It also implies that most of the NGOs work with the idea that economic instability is caused by social discrimination. NGOs use an effective way to explore and understand the concern and that is why they work with women within the community who help them to know the basic and foundation issues faced by women in the explored context.

WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

- Education has great possibilities for women empowerment.
- There are various schemes and policies that talks about the promotion of girls' education which eventually leads the notion of gender equality.
- Policies like National Policy on Education 1986, Plan of action 1991, National education policy 2020 extensively talk about girls' education with the larger aim to address stereotypes about women, their capabilities, contribution, and ability to achieve the set goals.
- The Sustainable Development Goals (2015) of United Nations accepted and recognized that 'gender equality is inextricably linked to the right to education.' This aim incorporates commitment toward ensuring the quality and equitable education for all without any form of discrimination based on any gender.
- To improve the quality education for all various recommendations are given by Education Policy 1986 and plan of action 1992. The recommendations of 1986 policy and plan of action 1992 were related to girls' hostel, ICT in schools, vocational education etc. to make school education accessible and approachable to all for quality education in India. RMSA was one of the schemes in this process under SSA (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan).
- To achieve universalization of secondary education following *guiding principles* was placed:
    - o Universal Access to All
    - o Equality and Social Justice
    - o Relevance and Development
    - o Curricular and Structural Aspect
- Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan is a government initiative launched by Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India (now Ministry of Education) in 2018. The program aims to provide quality education and enhance learning outcomes for all school-going children in India, from pre-school to higher secondary levels.

Notes

- Under the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan, the government has merged three previously separate schemes - Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA), and Teacher Education (TE) - into a single, integrated scheme. Some of the key components of the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan include the provision of infrastructure and facilities in schools, the improvement of teaching and learning processes, the enhancement of teacher education, the promotion of vocational education, and the inclusion of children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

- Various interventions were placed by RMSA to enhance the quality of education for all. These are teachers' appointment, academic focus, teacher education, ICT and education, reforms in curriculum, pedagogical reforms etc.

- Some of the interventions for promoting equity in education under RMSA are focused micro planning, new school in special zones, more female teachers and separate toilet blocks.

- NPEGEL was introduced to make education available for girls to the places hardest to reach. Its focus was to attend girls those were not in school. This programme was launched in 2003 as one of the significant component of SSA.

- The prime objective of NPEGEL was to develop cluster wise model schools to have better community engagement and connect for enhancing the enrolment of girls in schools.

- The Strategy adopted by NPEGEL was to include community, school teacher, Non-governmental organization, etc. to elevate the process of girls' education.

- The core focus of Mahila Samakhya (introduced in 1988) was to empower women through education and awareness. Mahila Samakhya developed a collective space (Sangha) for women to discuss important issues of their life.

- Under Mahila Samkhya few alternative structures like Nari Adalats, Counselling Centres, Sanjeevani Kendras/Herbal Medicine and information centers were also developed for women.

- Balika Samridhi Yojana was introduced by the government of India in 1997. Under this scheme government offered financial aid to all girl children born after 15 August 1997.

- Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya Scheme (KGBVs) was introduced by the government of India in 2004. This Scheme is about setting up residential schools at upper primary level for girls belong to disadvantaged sections of the educationally backward blocks (EBBs) in the country.

- KGBVS was also introduced for bridging gender and social category gaps at all levels of schooling.

- Open schooling, particularly NIOS has been found to be very much beneficial for many girls and women, who are unable to access education, and those who often drop

Notes

out due to multiple domestic, community and social factors due to flexibilities in time, pace and place. NIOS intervened through many unique initiatives including Second Chance Education (SCE), "Tejaswini: Socio-Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and Young Women Project" and Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBV) scheme for education of girls in remote areas.

- Along with various government initiatives different NGOs have also contributed in creating gender equality.
- Some of the work NGOs do towards gender equality and women empowerment are educational support, organizing rural women, development of different mechanisms for promoting gender equality, develop self-motivation in women, ensuring women empowerment, maximum use of available resources, developing spaces for women leadership in rural context, training programmes for women to enhance their capabilities etc.

TERMINAL EXERCISE

1. Discuss the role of government in promoting gender equality via education with suitable examples. Support your answer with various policies and schemes lunched by government.
2. Critically discuss the role of Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) in promoting equity and quality in, of and for education with various initiatives taken by it.
3. Discus any three objectives of RMSA toward girls' education.
4. What is the contribution of National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) in promoting and facilitating girls' education?
5. Discuss the core focus of Mahila Samkhya. Critically present the ways adopted to make this effort successful.
6. How have Balika Samridhi Yojana contributed in improving the condition of girls in India?
7. What role do NGOs play in promoting gender equality and women empowerment? Discuss with suitable examples.
8. Discuss some of the strategies adopted by NGOs to play effective role toward women education and social equality.
9. Explain the major component in Tejaswini project.
10. Describe any one of the major projects of NIOS in improving education of girls and women.

Notes

PROJECT

Identify some girls not attending schools. Discuss with them and their parents to locate the core problems regarding education and empowerment and complete the table given below:

S. No.	Name of the participant	Challenge/problem faced/ facing	Possible solution

ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

11.1

1. (a) To develop reading habits and enhance the capability of comprehension along with becoming aware about the current knowledge.

   (b) To have a hands on experience with reference to various subject taught in school

2. (a) Provide support to girls' education

3. These blocks were identified with reference to the rate of literacy as compared to national level.

11.2

1. To empower women through education and awareness.
2. Sangha
3. The objectives were to **c**hange the mindset of society towards girl child **and** improving of the enrollment and retention of the girl in primary and secondary schools.
4. d. Samagra Shiksha Abhiyaan
5. b. Jharkhand
6. Women are considered a major segment of population who can largely benefited from the ODL system as there are unique flexibilities in terms of time, pace and anywhere learning involved in it. Further, cost involved in ODL system is also less than formal education system

12

GENDER AND ACCESS TO FOOD

Food is essential for the survival of human life. We, productive beings, need food to live and perform. However, all humans are not seen as adequately fed and nourished. The signs of imbalance between food intake and body needs may be explicitly seen through frequent illnesses, fatigue and exhaustion. Therefore, the question is, why are all humans not adequately fed when it is so basic for survival?

Our health status is directly related to food intake in quantity and quality. Looking around, we find the most obvious distinction between the health status of men and women. The health indicators such as birth rate, mortality and life expectancy are better for men than for women at most ages except in old age. On the other hand, the low health status of women may indicate that their food intake is inadequate in quantity and inferior in quality. This may point to factors that vary in nature from personal to social and economic and have a direct and indirect link with the food intake of men and women. To understand it in-depth, each factor needs to be analysed in the context of gender within the food availability, access, and consumption framework.

In this lesson, we explore the relationship between gender and food access and consumption, particularly with reference to the Indian context.

OUTCOMES

After studying this lesson, learner:

- discusses the concepts of food availability, food access and food use;
- describes the economic factors that determine differential access to food;
- explains the socio-cultural practices that lead to disparity in access to food;
- identifies the major deficiency diseases for children and women in India and discuss their impact on health, viz. Anaemia and PCM (Protein, Calorie Malnutrition).

12.1 THE FOOD CYCLE: FOOD AVAILABILITY, ACCESS, AND USE

Women are an integral part of the Food Cycle. They work in agriculture production, from sowing and weeding to harvesting various crops, and are actively involved in processing, distributing, and marketing food products. However, their work is largely on family land, which keeps their economic role in agriculture hidden and unnoticed. Their work neither fetches them ownership of resources such as land, credit, technologies, finance, and other services nor any decision-making powers. Empirical studies suggest that if women have the same access to productive resources as men, they can boost their yields by 20–30%, leading to an increase in the overall agricultural output. Therefore, to improve agriculture production in the country, we need to close the gender gap in agricultural operations and ownership of resources.

12.1.1 From Production to Consumption

Food reaches us after passing through several stages: production of food, distribution of food, It grows at one place, is processed at another and is made available at another.

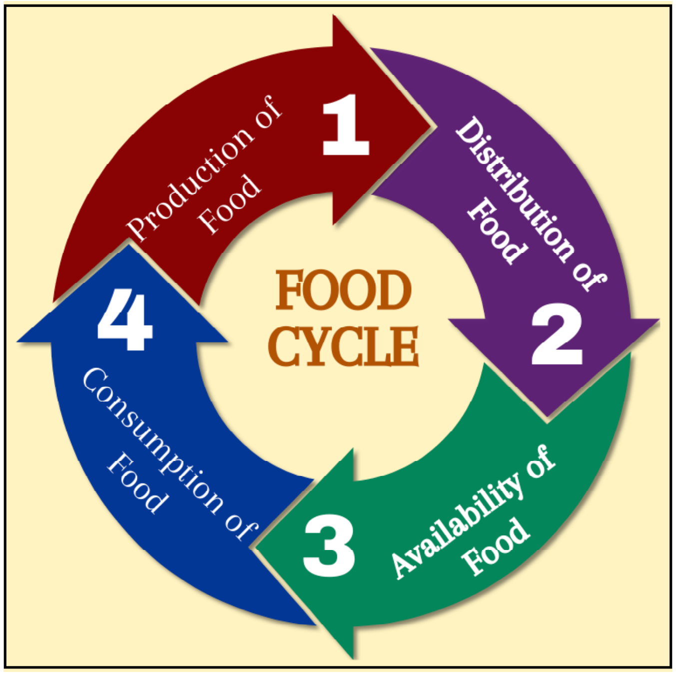


Fig 12.1: Stages of Food Cycle

There is value addition at every stage of the food cycle to make it palatable, likeable, and worthy of direct consumption. The various stages may be summed up as follows:

1. **Production of Food**

   India has a rich agriculture industry. The production of food grains and other agri-produce has steadily increased.

Notes

Food is grown on farms in different parts of the country. Around 70% of the people are engaged in agriculture and allied sectors. The main activity is to grow food such as wheat, cereals, pulses, vegetables, fruits, and nuts. The food grown in fields is raw and inedible. Therefore, it is processed in factories to make it edible. After food is processed, it is ready for packaging and labelling with product details. It is then made available in the market for direct consumption.

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) regulates the manufacture, storage, distribution, and sale of food and ensures that safe and wholesome food is available to people. It also creates an information network nationwide so that the public, consumers, etc, receive rapid, reliable, and accurate information about food safety and hygiene and related issues (Visit: http://www.fssai.gov.in).

2. Distribution of Food

Food is distributed across the country after it is processed and packaged in manufacturing units. The processed food is stored in proper storage facilities, which maintain the optimum temperature and moisture levels required to maintain the shelf life of different items.

Food is transported safely in covered vans and trucks for distribution. The food in an open market is priced considering factors like labour, equipment, machinery and other resource inputs. Food costs vary from place to place as per the quality and quantity of food packaged in a packet. However, the Maximum Retail Price (MRP) printed on packaged food is meant to keep the selling price of an item under check.

3. Availability of food

Food availability relates to food supply through production, distribution, and exchange. Food availability is defined as sufficient quantities of foods available consistently. Food is made available in two ways:

- **Open Market Sale** – Food is available in the market, and people can purchase it from shops at prevailing rates for different items.
- **Public Distribution System** – This is the food security measure of the Government to make food available at subsidised rates. The Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Government of India, has ensured food security for people through Public Distribution System (PDS). The aim is to distribute subsidised food and non-food items to the country's poor. A network of PDS outlets provides food such as cereals, oil, and wheat at a rate much subsidised than the market. A ration card is issued to the family to access food under the PDS. To avail food under this category, the total family income must be under a certain amount decided on the parameters of the poverty line defined by the Government.

Notes

4. Consumption of Food

The last stage of the Food Cycle is the most important of all. After going through several stages, food reaches our table. It is at this stage that we get to eat food which has a direct implication on our health and capacity to work. There are 3 main factors that operate at this stage:

a. **Purchase of food:** The household is the unit for food procurement, preparation, and consumption. It is usually the Head of the family or the person who handles money in the home who purchases/procures food for all. They visit the market to buy food as per the money allocated for it and the likes/dislikes of the household members. Multiple factors determine the choice of food purchased by a family for consumption.

Fig 12.2: Purchase of Food

Notes

b. **Cooking and Distribution:** The food is cooked at home and is distributed among the members. One person, usually the woman of the house, is tasked with preparing meals for all. She cooks the meals and distributes them among the members. At this stage, social and cultural norms and beliefs intervene and control the food distribution mechanism within the family. Therefore, women are responsible for cooking, but social norms affect the distribution and consumption of food.

c. **Share of women in the family:** There is enough empirical evidence to say that the woman of the house is the last one to eat in the family. She eats food only after distributing it among the family members. This practice has a very adverse effect on their health. Therefore, the correlation between women's food intake and total food availability in the family needs to be studied in the existing socio-cultural milieu of society.

12.2 ACCESS TO FOOD

Access to food refers to the final food intake of a person or how much they finally get to eat. At home, access to food may depend on the following factors:

1. Economic Access

The family purchases food according to its gross income and the proportionate amount kept aside for purchase and preparation. A portion of the total money in the household is generally held aside for food procurement and preparation. The higher the income, the greater the quantity and choice of food purchased for consumption in the home. The availability of food in the family, therefore, fluctuates with the prevailing rate in the market from where it is purchased.

2. Direct Access

There are families, particularly in rural areas, which own a piece of land and grow food for their own consumption using human and material resources. Depending upon the land size, the family grows and receives the produce. The larger the land, the more food that can be grown and is available for consumption by the family. Conversely, growing food on a smaller piece of land brings less food for family consumption and restricts the available quantity.

3. Social Protection

Public Distribution System (PDS) provides food security at the household level. People below the poverty line are issued ration cards to buy food from government outlets at a much more subsidised rate than the market.

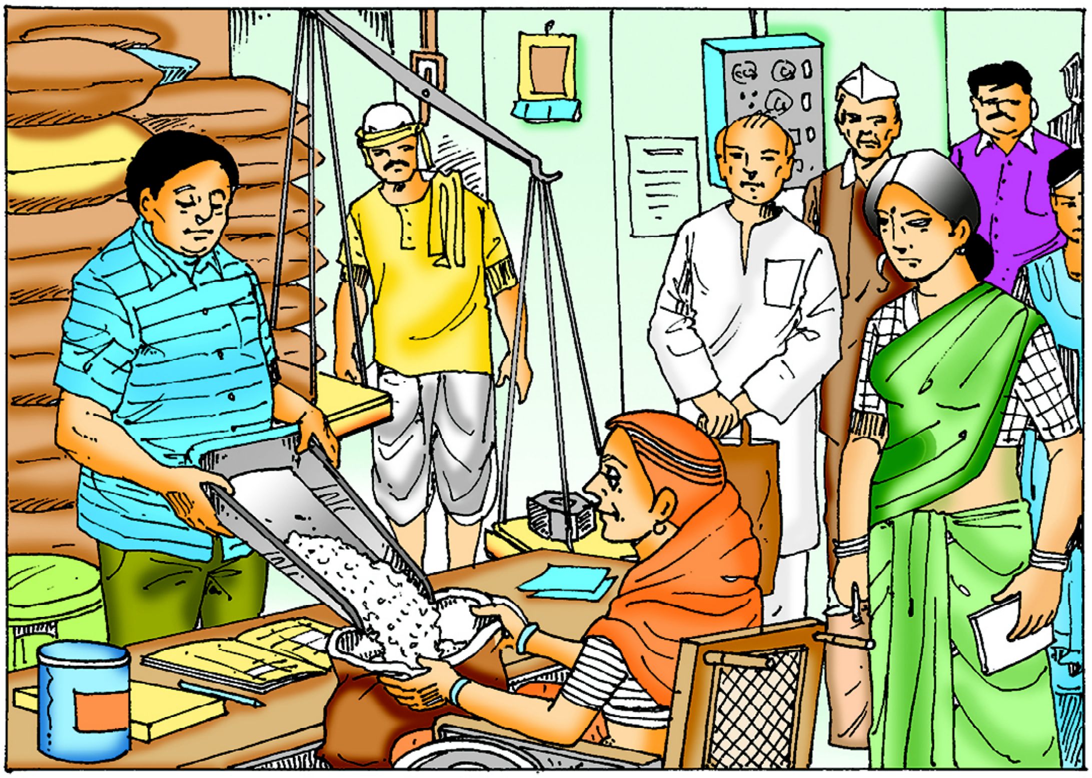


Fig 12.3: People purchasing food grains at a PDS shop

PDS is a food security measure to ensure that all household members have access to enough food for an active, healthy life. In addition, it provides that none of the members lives in hunger or fear of starvation.

To conclude, the quantity and quality of food consumed by the family are constrained by economic access, social protection and direct access to food, as explained above.

Access to food implies *Sufficient resources to obtain appropriate foods for a nutritious diet.*

National Level: The country's food access from the country's production and the global market.

Household Level: The members' ability to produce their food or purchase food from the market.

Individual Level: Individual's ability to meet their nutritional needs

INTEXT QUESTIONS 12.1

1. Explain Food Cycle?

2. Comment on the role of women in the Food Cycle.

3. Discuss the mechanism of social protection with respect to access to food.

12.2.1 Gender and Access to Food

A household's access to sufficient and nutritious food may not assure adequate food intake by all household members, as intra-household food allocation may not sufficiently meet each household member's requirements. This may hold valid given the socio-cultural factors and existing gender equations where bias and discrimination against women and girls are now a fact.

There is a strong relationship between gender-based discrimination and the channels households, and individuals access food. The unequal access to food is, by and large, defined by the following factors:

- **Gender Inequality:**

  Gender inequality exists in various forms. For example, women face discrimination in education and employment opportunities and within the household, where their bargaining power is lower.

  Women and girls make up 60 percent of the world's chronically hungry. Moreover, their health status is relatively poor in comparison to men. Though the Equal Right to Food for women has been enshrined in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, not much has been achieved to ensure it is on the ground.

Gender discrimination is a stark reality which impacts food, nutrition and health outcome for women and girls. Women are discriminated against for:

- **Inheritance Rights -** Denied under the pretext of family lineage and continuity.
- **Low Wage Rate -** Paid less for as much work performed by men.
- **Employment & Income -** Restricted options to work and earn
- **Decision making -** Very limited participation.
- **Social status -** Given a status lower than men.
- **Unequal distribution -** Provided fewer resources than men.
- **Food and medical care -** The last to receive in the family

Women have a significant role and responsibility in the food sector. They contribute tremendously to food production, processing, distribution, and marketing. At home, they procure, store, prepare, distribute, and ensure that all members have ample food. However, data indicate that girls have significantly worse health and nutrition outcomes than boys. The reason for this

Notes

discrepancy may be seen in gender discrimination in the intra-household allocation of resources. The preference for boys in our families is a fact coupled with higher resources spent on boys than girls. These include more access to food, education and learning opportunities for boys than girls.

Women's access to food is closely connected to the access of food to the household. Women are primarily responsible for the food supply in the household. Women have access to food through production on family farms or through purchasing it with money. Gender roles often create socio-cultural constraints on women's access to food. These constraints are interrelated with each other. The three major kinds of constraints are: Physical, Socio-cultural, and Economic

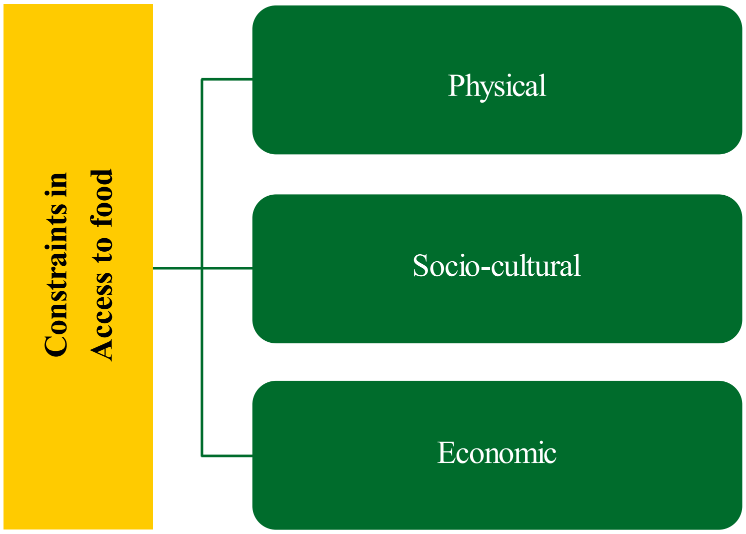


Figure 12.4: Various Constraints for access to food

Various factors are explained as under:

- **Physical Access to Food**

  Generally, women are less mobile and more time-constrained due to the gender-based division of labour in the household and socio-cultural norms. While men are generally held responsible for income-generating activities, women oversee childcare and time-consuming domestic activities. Lack of time and workload at home may constrain women from maintaining optimum food intake.

- **Economic Access to Food**

  Women have less decision-making power in the household. Their restricted mobility outside the home limits their engagement with the market. As a result, they have fewer chances to participate in income-generating activities in the market. This may reduce their bargaining power and weaken their say in access to and distribution of intra-household resources. Due to malnutrition, women's participation in the economic system

and their productivity also get adversely affected. This results in a vicious cycle of women, nourishment, and productivity. The productivity of an undernourished woman is low, and when coupled with illiteracy, all the chances for her to find work are negated.

- **Socio-cultural Access to Food:**

  Customary practices often dictate differential roles, privileges, and life options for women and men, especially favouring the latter. For example, the woman's access to food at home is determined by the meal-eating pattern of the household. The pattern is based on multiple factors such as age, sex, social status, and decision-making power of the member.

  In economic stress, access to quantity and quality of food is further reduced for women. Moreover, the intra-household distribution of food becomes more biased against women and girls owing to gendered social norms, raising gender-specific nutritional needs and lifecycle vulnerabilities.

Family is not a homogenous unit operating with members who share the same amount of access to and utilisation of the household's resources, including food-an underline dynamic impacts intra-household resource allocation and its effects on distribution within the family.

ACTIVITY 12.1

Visit 5-6 house at Lunch or dinner time. Observe their meal eating patterns and make a report on how all the members sit together, how food is served, who serves the food, and if personal preferences are asked when serving it, etc.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 12.2

1. Define gender discrimination?

2. What do you understand by access to food in the context of gender?

3. Clarify how do women's access to food differ from that of men?

12.3 Major deficiency diseases in India

Insufficient food intake or hunger causes ill health and many associated deformities. There is a decrease in body size, known in medical terms as stunting or stunted growth. This process starts *in utero* if the mother is malnourished. This state continues through approximately the third year of life. It leads to higher infant and child mortality.

Our body requires many different vitamins and minerals crucial for both body development and disease prevention. These vitamins and minerals are often referred to as micronutrients. Unfortunately, they aren't produced naturally in the body, so we must get them from food.

A nutritional deficiency occurs when the body does not get the necessary amount of a nutrient. Deficiencies can lead to a variety of health problems. These can include digestion problems, skin disorders, stunted or defective bone growth, and dementia.

Nutritional deficiencies cause irreversible damage to the human body. These lead to stunted growth, which cannot be reversed even with improved nutritional intake later in life.

Nutritional deficiencies adversely affect health in three ways:

- Premature failure of vital organs occurs during adulthood. For example, a 50-year-old individual might die of heart failure because his/her heart suffered structural defects during early development.
- Stunted individuals suffer a far higher rate of disease and illness than those who have not undergone stunting.
- Severe malnutrition in early childhood often leads to defects in cognitive development.

Poor food intake among women and children directly impacts nutritional deficiencies among them. Taking the average nutritional status of households, severe malnutrition has been found among the women in eastern states and the state of U.P. and M.P.

In India, women face most health problems due to socio-cultural and gender discrimination. As a result, the high-risk periods in their lives are the early childhood and reproductive years.

In India, higher female mortality between ages 1 and 5 and high maternal mortality rates are due to the following reasons:

- Inadequate and poor nutrition
- Poor access to primary healthcare
- Poor reproductive health
- Discrimination against girls

The practice of sex determination tests and induced abortion of female fetuses lead to a skewed sex ratio. For example, the sex ratio in India is 943 females per 1000 males (Population Census, 2011).

Gender disparity in nutrition prevails from infancy to adulthood. Girls are breastfed for shorter periods during infancy. Therefore, malnutrition among girls below five years of age is an underlying cause of death.

Adolescence, between the ages 10 and 13 years in girls, is characterised by a growth spurt, i.e., growth is very fast in this phase. During this time, physical changes affect the body's nutritional needs.

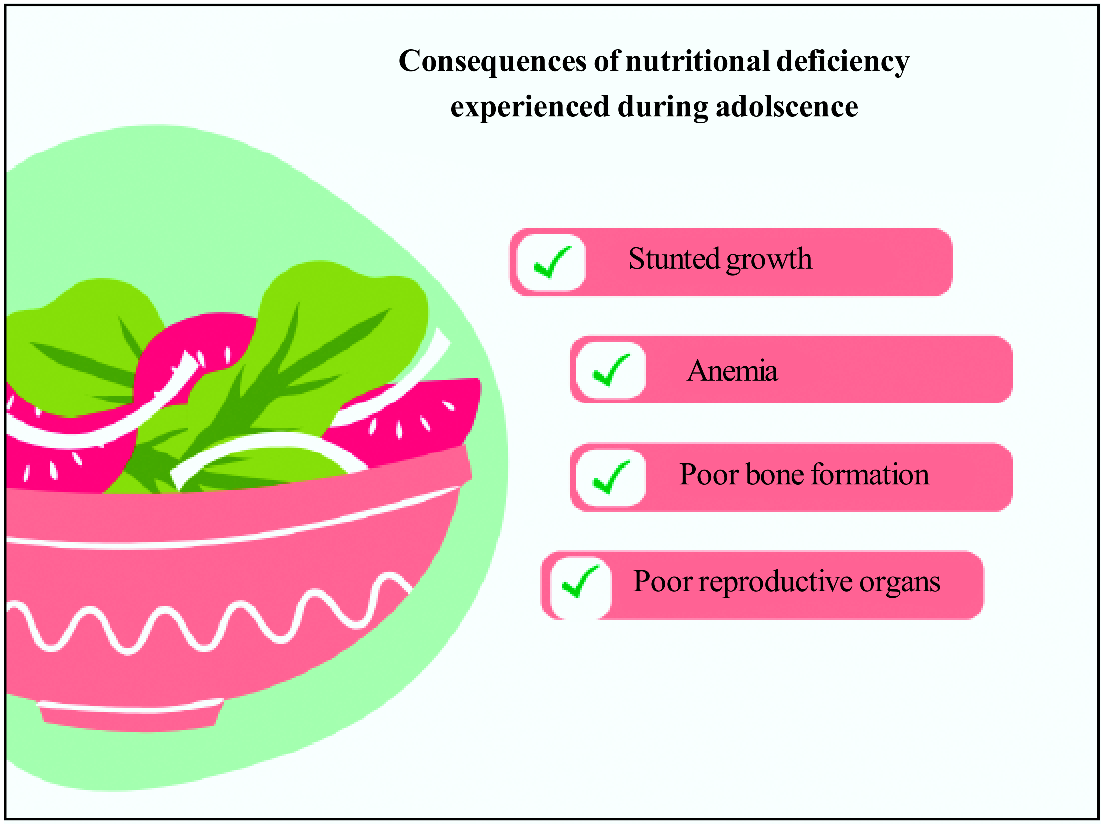


Fig 12.5: Consequences of nutritional deficiency

Any nutritional deficiency experienced during this critical period can result in stunted growth, Anemia, poor bone formation and reproductive organs and their functions. Stunted growth during adolescence has a negative bearing on the health status of women during adulthood and beyond.

ACTIVITY 12.2

Find out the sex ratio of top and bottom 5 states in India based on Census 2011

12.3.1 Major Deficiency Problems

There are various primary nutritional problems found among women in India. Thesea are given in the diagram.

Notes

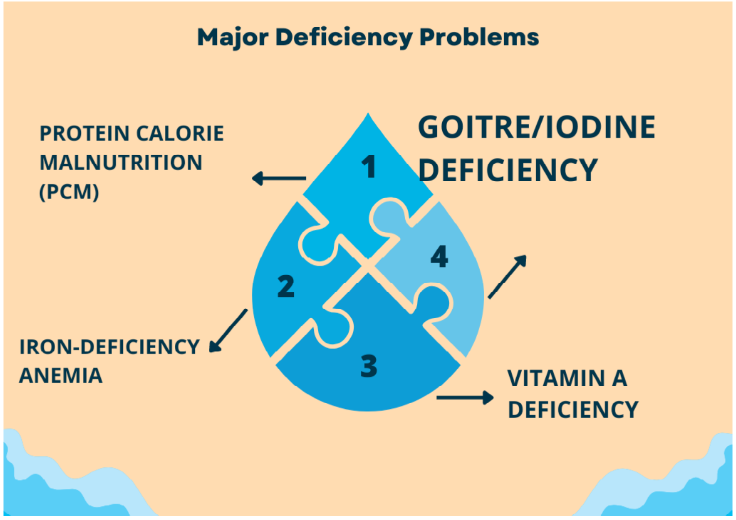


Fig 12.6: Major Deficiency Problems

- **Protein Calorie Malnutrition (PCM)**

  PCM is the primary cause of death in underdeveloped countries. Also called protein-energy malnutrition (PEM) is caused by insufficient nutritional intake to meet the body's needs.

  The clinical signs and symptoms of PCM include the following:

  - Poor weight gain
  - Slowing of linear growth
  - Behavioural changes - Irritability, apathy, decreased social responsiveness, anxiety and attention deficits

In Indian conditions, the dietary sources of proteins and calories are the same. Therefore, an adequate quota of calories is expected to ensure adequate protein in the diet.

- **Iron-deficiency Anemia**

  Iron deficiency anaemia is the most common type of Anaemia. It occurs when our body doesn't have enough mineral iron to make haemoglobin, a protein in red blood cells in our blood responsible for carrying oxygen to the tissues. Anaemia occurs when we have a decreased level of haemoglobin in our blood.

Iron Deficiency Anemia is a global health problem primarily due to iron deficiency. It involves a population of all age groups and sex. But adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women are more vulnerable to it. According to the latest available estimates, 59.1% of Indian adolescent girls are anaemic (NFHS-V, 2019). The symptoms of iron deficiency Anemia are general fatigue, weakness, pale skin, shortness of breath, dizziness, cold hands and feet, irregular heartbeat and headaches.

Notes

In India, nutritional Anaemia is a significant public health problem.

Anaemia complicates childbearing, causing higher maternal and infant deaths, maternal depletion, and low birth weight infants, but it also severely affects women's productivity and quality of life. About 20% of maternal deaths are estimated to be directly related to Anaemia, and another 50% are associated with it. The reasons for maternal deaths include sepsis, abortion, haemorrhage, Anaemia, etc. Sexually transmitted diseases, HIV, have serious implications for women. Many deliveries take place at homes, with untrained assistance, resulting in increased chances of infection and death. Due to low status, women are mostly not involved in decision-making, including contraceptive use, family size, etc. More so, they often seek medical help only if an illness is advanced and the chances of survival are less.

The control of Anaemia in India is a challenging issue. Reasons like inadequate dietary intake of iron, defective iron absorption, increased iron requirements due to repeated pregnancies and lactation, poor iron reserves at birth, the timing of umbilical cord clamping, timing and type of complementary food introduction, frequency of infections in children, and excessive physiological blood loss during adolescence and pregnancy are some of the causes for a high prevalence of Anaemia. Oral intake of iron salts like Ferrous Sulphate tablets helps check iron deficiency Anaemia. These are very low-cost tablets available in the market. For direct consumption, intake of iron-rich green leafy vegetables (amaranth, drumstick leaves, coriander, etc.), jaggery, ragi and dried fruits help check Anaemia. Prophylactic administration of Iron and Folic acid to women and children in poor communities as part of routine PHC services through MCH centres and schools must also be strengthened to prevent Anaemia.

- **Vitamin A Deficiency**

  Vitamin A deficiency is a common form of micronutrient malnutrition affecting 21.1% of preschool-age children and 5.6% of pregnant women worldwide.

Vitamin A plays a vital role in our vision. To see the full spectrum of light, our eye needs to produce certain pigments for the photoreceptor cells in the retina to work properly. Vitamin A deficiency stops the production of these pigments, leading to night blindness. Nyctalopia (Night Blindness) is one of the first signs of Vitamin A deficiency.

Vitamin A deficiency is the leading cause of preventable blindness in children worldwide. An estimated 250,000 to 500,000 children become blind every year because of vitamin A deficiency. Half of these children die within a year of losing sight.

In pregnant women, vitamin A deficiency causes night blindness and may contribute to maternal mortality. Vitamin A deficiency also compromises the immune system, increasing the chance of death from malaria, measles and diarrhoea.

Vitamin A is found in many foods, including red, yellow, and orange vegetables and fruits (carrots, sweet potatoes, pumpkin, mangoes, papaya), eggs, and cantaloupes. Lack of access

Notes

to a balanced diet with enough vitamin A can lead to its deficiency.

- **Goitre/Iodine Deficiency:**

  Iodine deficiency is a lack of the trace element iodine, an essential nutrient in the diet. It may result in a goitre, which results in developmental delays and other health problems. Therefore, iodine deficiency is a significant public health issue as it is a preventable cause of intellectual disability. Globally, 2.2 billion people live in areas with iodine deficiencies, with the risks of resulting complications, while in India, 167 million people are at risk of Iodine Deficiency Disorder (IDD), 54.4 million people have a goitre, and 8.8 million people have IDD-related mental/motor handicaps.

Prevention includes the intake of iodised salt and iodine compounds added to other foodstuffs, such as flour, water and milk. Seafood is also a well-known source of iodine. However, iodised salt consumption is low due to a lack of knowledge about iodine deficiency diseases, poverty and the low availability of iodised salt in the far-off area.

In India, there are a host of other mineral and vitamin deficiency diseases, other deficiency anaemias, like folic acid, vitamin B12 and B6 deficiency anaemias, and problems caused by food toxicants like adulteration of mustard oil with argemone seed oil and consumption of ground nut flour contaminated by a toxic fungal growth in groundnut seeds.

To improve the health status of women and children, we need to bring a social shift in access, availability, and food distribution within the family society.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 12.3

1. Why does Nutritional Deficiency occur?
2. What are the main types of common nutritional deficiencies?
3. What is iron deficiency Anaemia?

WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

- Women are directly and indirectly involved in various food production, processing, packaging, and marketing stages. However, at the stage of food consumption, their food intake gets conditioned by socio-cultural beliefs and norms.
- Access to food refers to the final food intake of a person or how much they finally get to eat. Unfortunately, women's access to food is, by and large, restricted by the prevailing gender bias and discrimination which results in multiple health problems.

Notes

- Less food intake in quantity and quality cause nutritional deficiencies with a long-term harmful impact on the body. Common nutritional deficiencies occur due to a lesser intake of vitamins, minerals and iron in food. These are, however, preventable and can be addressed through optimum food intake and nutritional supplements.
- To improve the health status of women, the prevailing socio-cultural norms need to be addressed through awareness-building and gender-responsive services.

TERMINAL EXERCISE

1. What is the role of women in the food cycle?
2. Why do women suffer from health ailments more than men?
3. Which socio-cultural practices restrict women's access to food?
4. What are the different modes of food distribution in India?
5. How can women prevent nutritional deficiencies?
6. Observe the food intake of an adolescent brother and a sister in a family over two complete days. Note down the frequency and quantity of food consumed separately by both. Tabulate the information and compare the two. Draw comparisons on food consumption based on age, sex and gender of the brother and the sister.

ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

12.1

1. The food cycle is the complete process from agriculture production to food availability to the people. It involves various stages, such as growing, harvesting, processing, packaging, marketing, and distribution of food products.
2. Women are involved in various stages of the food cycle. They work in family-owned farms and are responsible for the tasks such as sowing, weeding, harvesting, cleaning and packaging food items.
3. Social protection is ensured through Public Distribution System, which provides subsidised food and non-food items to the country's poor. A network of outlets under the Public Distribution System (PDS) provides food such as cereals, oil and sugar at a rate much subsidised than the market. PDS provides household food security whereby all members always have access to enough food for an active and healthy life. In addition, it ensures that none of the members lives in hunger or fear of starvation.

Notes

12.2

1. Gender discrimination is prejudice or discrimination based on a person's sex or gender. Women and girls are deprived of their right to live and educate due to gender bias against the female child.
2. Food is generally distributed in the family. Each member is given the food for his/her age and likes/dislikes. Usually, the woman of the house cooks and distributes food among the family members.
3. Women's access to food depends on two main factors:
4. Economic Access to Food:

   Women have comparatively lesser mobility outside the home, so their engagement with the market remains very restricted. As a result, their chance to participate in income-generating activities is reduced, so their bargaining power is reduced. This limits their say in access to and distribution of intra-household resources, including food. Subsequently, food, as a priority item of consumption, remains more accessible to other family members than the women.

- Socio-cultural Access to Food:

  Customs and culture dictate differential roles, privileges, and life options for women and men, especially favouring the latter. A woman's access to food is primarily determined by the meal-eating pattern followed in the household. This pattern is based on multiple factors such as age, sex, social status and decision-making power of the member and the priority given to the same. With women at the receiving end, their share in available food is often compromised. They would voluntarily forgo their share in a particular food item for the love and concern of the other family member.

12.3

1 Insufficient food intakes deplete our body of essential nutrients. As a result, our body becomes weak and loses its ability to fight against infection and illness. Nutritional deficiencies occur when the quantity and quality of food intakes are below essential requirements. The Indian Council of Medical Research defines the recommended nutritional daily allowances.

2 The common nutritional deficiencies are Protein, Calorie Malnutrition, Iron deficiency Anaemia, Vitamin A, B12 and Goitre due to iodine deficiency.

3 Iron deficiency Anaemia is the most common type of Anaemia. It occurs when our body doesn't have enough mineral iron, which is required to make Hemoglobin. Lack of iron in the bloodstream leads to insufficient oxygen in our body and we get symptoms like tiredness, dizziness and cold hands and feet.

13

GENDER AND HEALTH – REPRODUCTIVE, MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL WELL BEING

By now, you must have understood that the male and female sex is biological, and for sexual reproduction, both are required. Both sexes differ from each other in the structure of their reproductive organ systems, which are aptly adapted to their specific roles in reproduction. Gender is a social construct, and sexuality is dependent on several factors, many of which are yet unknown. However, health is vital for all human beings in all its aspects – reproductive, mental and emotional and the contents of this chapter attempts to address these aspects. These include issues and concerns of adolescent health, prevention of the use of intoxicant substances and anti-health behaviours.

Generating awareness about the ill consequences on society of desire for male children and skewed sex ratio has been attempted. Behaviours promoting patriarchy, desire for a male child and the consequent skewed sex ratio are to be addressed for a positive change for more gender just society. The importance of maternal health and the necessity of dispelling myths and misconceptions related to reproduction are discussed. An awareness of life in conflict zones is also included in this lesson.

OUTCOMES

After studying this lesson, learner:

- appreciates and shares the charms and challenges of growing up.
- discusses the issues and concerns of health during adolescence.
- links consumption of enough food and rest with pregnancy and childbirth outcomes.
- explains cultural practices related to maternal health and reproduction.
- expresses concerns about declining sex ratio and sex-selective abortions.

- dispels myths and misconceptions related to gender.
- becomes aware of the consequences of substance abuse and insist on refraining from habit-forming substances.
- emphasises the unhealthy impact of RTI, STI and sexual abuse.

13.1 CHARMS AND CHALLENGES OF GROWING UP

Read the extract written below-

When we brought Tanvi home as a six-month-old infant, we wondered why she did not cry as she changed hands from the nanny of the orphanage to my welcoming outstretched arms. Since that day, Tanvi has passed childhood and, from a dark, beautiful snub-nosed child, has grown into an attractive young lady. She is beginning to have an attitude and has a visibly large appetite. She is making friends, mostly girls but is selective about whom she mixes up with. Today, at 17, she has large dusky eyes and shiny dark skin. She is eloquent, self-confident, hardworking and helpful. However, for certain decisions, she depends on her parents. She is generally happy, but sometimes, we have to tolerate her changing moods. Her hormones, I know, are responsible for all these changes, which are now noticeable.

The above paragraph is part of a conversation between a mother and her friends which covers the description of her 17-year-old daughter. You may consider it as a case study for adolescence.

13.1.1 Puberty and Adolescence: Physical, Mental and Emotional Changes

World Health Organisation (WHO) defines individuals aged 10 to 19 as adolescents. Puberty is the beginning of adolescence when girls and boys begin to undergo physical changes, such as growing of axial and pubic hair. Girls begin to develop breasts, and boys grow a moustache. Puberty merges into adolescence as individuals show a growth spurt with an increase in height and appearance of secondary sexual characters. However, physical changes add to the charm of growing into adulthood. It becomes necessary for elders to motivate adolescents to build up self-confidence.

Since adolescence is a period of transition between childhood and adulthood, it is marked by mental turmoil for the adolescent for whom the sudden noticeable physical changes may come as a surprise. The onset of menstruation in girls and occasional wet dreams in boys also worry them unless some guidance is provided beforehand, either through sex education or by teachers or parents.

New relationships with girls and boys of the same age group are enjoyable but may sometimes be worrisome. Relationships develop and assume great importance for adolescents. In addition,

adolescence is a period of high energy levels. If properly guided, the energies of adolescents can be channelled to express inherent creativity and talent and, at the same time, help them mature into balanced adults.

ACTIVITY 13.1

Make a table listing the physical, mental and emotional changes during adolescence using your experiences and knowledge gained from books or seers.

ACTIVITY 13.2

Use the case study given earlier in this lesson and underline the words, phrases or sentences used to describe adolescent characteristics.

13.1.2 Socio-cultural challenges faced by adolescents

Apart from the challenges of undergoing changing body and mind, certain socio-cultural challenges faced by adolescents. These are as follows-

Socio-cultural Challenges faced by adolescents

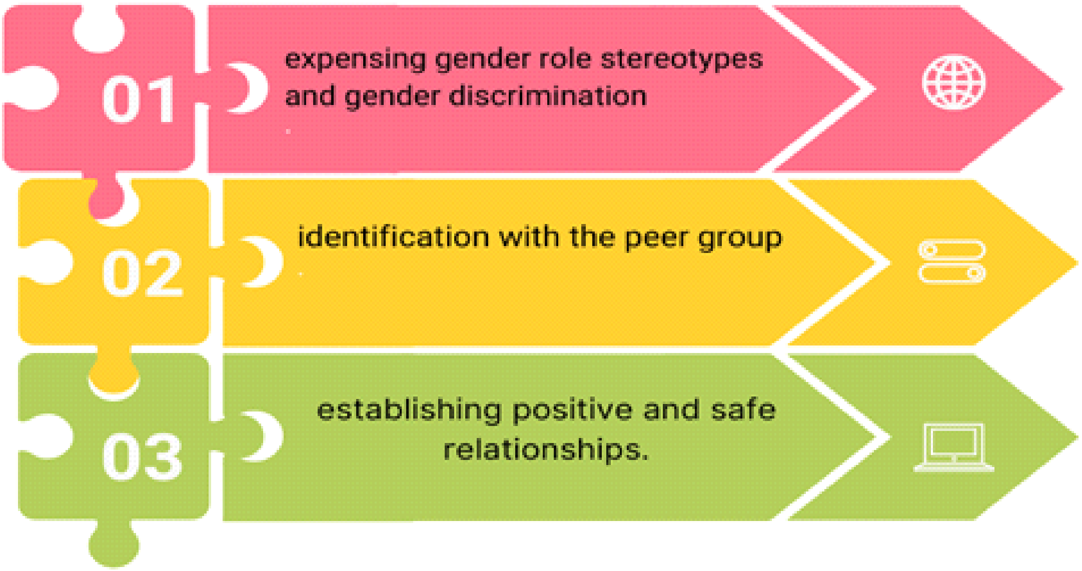


Fig 13.1: Socio-cultural Challenges faced by adolescents

It is unfortunate that even in modern times, gender roles may be stereotyped, which also affects how girls and boys are brought up. For example, boys are given nutritious food,

Notes

whereas such nutrition to adolescent girls is denied in some families. Similarly, some girls are made to undertake domestic work, whereas boys are asked to go out for family errands. Such stereotypes affect their self-esteem.

During adolescence, the need to be part of a peer group is high. Nevertheless, the timing for the appearance of adolescent characteristics may not be the same for all individuals of the same age group, which may cause anguish. Further, adolescence is the period when interpersonal relationships get established. As friendships develop, romantic relationships and heartbreaks also occur. Often adolescents stray into the path of wrongdoings such as substance abuse under peer pressure. Socio-economic disparities cause problems with parents. Therefore, it is desirable that adolescents establish positive and responsible relationships.

Parents, teachers, older siblings, or even friends can guide them regarding a safety net available when adolescents need it.

It becomes necessary for adolescents to be aware of hormonal changes that occur naturally and bring about physical changes and ultimately lead the body to gain sexual maturity. In addition, educational intervention from appropriate sources regarding these changes helps them become comfortable with the changes.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 13.1

1. State the ages between which falls period of adolescence.
2. Mention two characteristic visible features that distinguish adolescent boys from adolescent girls.
3. Why should there be no gender discrimination during adolescence? Give two reasons.

13.2 ISSUES AND CONCERNS OF GROWING UP HEALTH

13.2.1 Adequate Nutrition and Exercise during Adolescence.

Adolescence is marked by rapid growth and development of the body and its parts. Individuals' genetic makeup, nutrition and exercise are determinants of growth in height, weight, healthy looks and energetic behaviour.

Food: Not only is the kind of food essential, but also eating it at appropriate intervals. A schedule needs to be maintained for nutritious breakfast, lunch and dinner. An erratic eating time for different meals may result in over or under-nutrition, which is detrimental to health. Adequate nutrition comes from a meal in which nutrients like protein, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins and minerals are in balanced proportion. A balanced diet benefits all in the following ways;

- proper physical growth;
- strong teeth;
- strong bones, well-developed muscles, and
- timely reproductive and sexual maturity

Undernutrition causes health problems in teenagers. As mentioned, in our predominantly patriarchal society, boys are served nutritious food in a relatively large quantity than girls in some families. This impacts the health of girls and women adversely. Undernourished girls not only lack proper physical growth but are also at risk of developing complications during pregnancy and childbirth.

Overeating and an unbalanced diet lead to obesity and nutritional disorders. Food items like noodles, pasta, chocolates, and sweets are delicious but rich in sugars and starch (Carbohydrates). Excess carbohydrates get converted into fat which accumulates in the body. That is why those people who regularly eat this so-called 'junk food' usually become fat and obese. Obesity leads to heart problems, and such people may experience difficulty in running and playing. Often obese people also may have low self-esteem.

ACTIVITY 13.3

Check if you are underweight, overweight or have a normal weight

Measure your height and weight and calculate your BMI or Body Mass Index

$$\text{BMI} = \frac{(\text{Weight in kilograms})}{(\text{Height in meters})^2}$$

Then check results from the table given below:

BMI	Category
<18.5	Underweight
18.5-24.9	Normal
25-29.9	Over weight
>30	Obese

The normal weight norm can be easily reached by having healthy habits of eating and exercise.

Common nutritional disorders that may affect some adolescents are:

Anaemia: Lack of intake of iron-rich food, e.g. green leafy vegetables

Bulimia nervous: Periods of overeating and later vomiting due to fear of weight gain

Anorexia: Extreme dieting, fasting and over-exercising to prevent weight gain

Obesity: Excessively fat due to lack of protein and excess carbohydrates.

13.2.2 Importance of exercise and yoga

Exercise and yoga are important for good health, especially during adolescence. Exercise, whether through long and brisk walking or playing outdoor games or doing exercises regularly, is useful for:

- Stimulating the growth of muscles
- Keeping a check on body weight and
- Managing stress in our daily lives.

13.2.3 Teenage pregnancy

During adolescence, boys and girls become biologically capable of sexual activity. Due to the action of sex hormones, they not only mature sexually but also develop secondary sexual characteristics. However, adolescents are not mentally or psychologically mature enough to

Fig. 13.2: Cases of Anemia among girls

Early pregnancy thus exposes a girl to health risks such as anaemia and prolonged labour may damage the reproductive tract and, in a few cases, may even lead to death. Moreover, newborn to young and undernourished mothers are also of low birth weight and are prone to death.

The legal marriageable age in India is 18 for girls and 21 for boys, according to the Child Marriage restraint Act 1978. But early marriage is still a norm in many parts of India due to factors like

- gender discrimination
- caste system and dowry; and
- young married women are coerced into becoming pregnant to prove their fertility by elders in the family.

Adolescent marriage and pregnancy are social problems and can be a trauma for young girls. Their education gets disrupted, and the future becomes bleak. Motherhood is too much of a responsibility and does not give any joy as is expected. This causes emotional problems and adversely impacts normal family life.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 13.2

1. Name the two factors necessary for good health during adolescence.
2. Why is teenage pregnancy not good?
3. Name any two nutritional disorders likely to affect adolescents.

13.3 SUBSTANCE ABUSE, REPRODUCTIVE TRACK INFECTIONS AND SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS AND SEXUAL ABUSE

13.3.1 What is substance abuse?

Drugs are of common use as medicines for curing diseases and disorders. However, when drugs or substances are put to non-medical use, the practice becomes drug abuse or substance abuse.

Adolescents are more vulnerable to substance misuse as they are likely to experiment and are amenable to peer pressure. Substance abuse begins as a trial and then leads to phases of drug tolerance, then dependence and ultimately drug addiction, which is a threatening consequence.

The commonly abused substances are alcohol, tobacco, marijuana or Ganja, cough syrups, caffeine, cocaine, opiates, cannabis, inhalants and even solvents such as petrol, glue and correction ink which are not meant for oral consumption. In addition, hallucinogens such as

Notes

LSD (Lysergic Acid Diethylamide), PCP (Phencyclidine) etc., are also addictive.

An individual resorts to experiencing the effects of drug abuse either under peer pressure or for experimentation. However, once begin, they slowly become drug-tolerant and then drug dependent as their craving for the drug increases and ultimately become a victim of drug addiction, which affects their physical, mental and emotional health and social relationships of the addict. As a result, withdrawal from drugs becomes difficult. Certain drugs can be procured easily. They are legitimately manufactured and distributed through ethical chemists and druggists. Others are prohibited drugs whose manufacturing and distribution are prohibited except for approved or medical purposes.

Substance abuse harms pregnant women as both mother and foetus are harmed since the abused substance reaches the foetus through the mother's blood.

You can see the general effects of drugs in the following figures

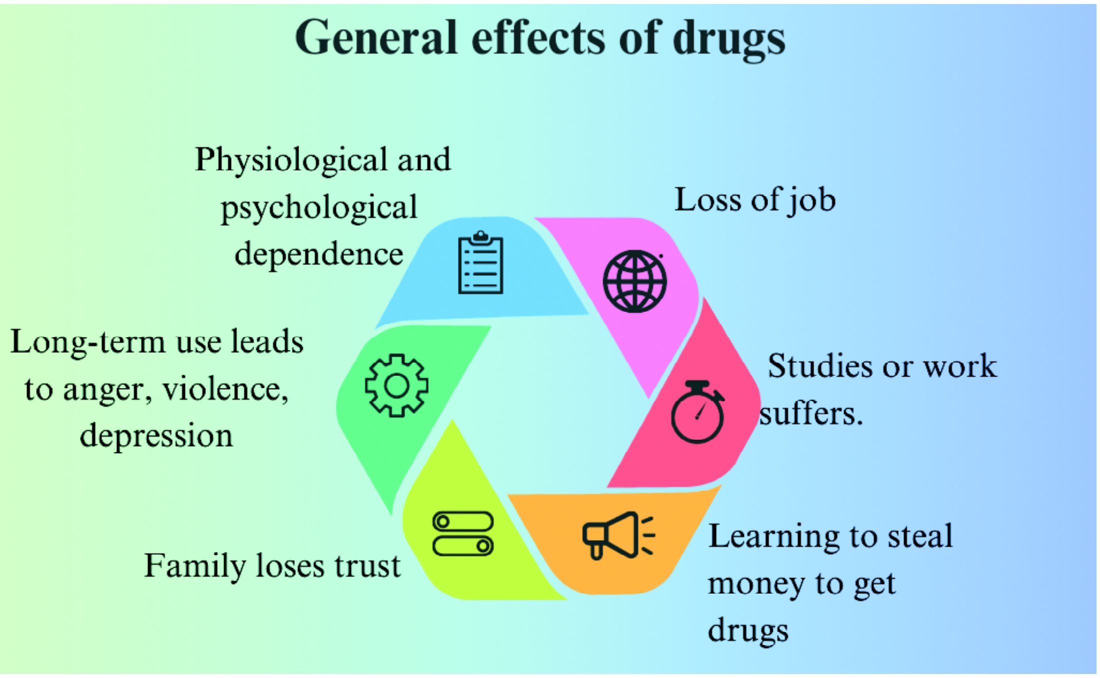


Fig. 13.3 General effects of drugs

Prevention

Drug abuse can be prevented by generating awareness about the consequences of drug abuse. Adolescents must be made aware of the need to keep themselves safe and away from substance abuse. They have to be prepared to Say No (to Drugs and to smoking tobacco)

To be aware and empowered to understand the harm done to the body

Engage in (socially) productive work so that there is no time inclination for drug abuse.

Have a safety net comprised of teachers, parents, relatives, counsellors, health professionals or other persons to whom they have access.

Notes

13.3.2 Unhealthy Impact of RTIs and STIs

RTI and STI are two abbreviations for Reproductive Tract Infections and Sexually Transmitted Infections such as Syphilis and Gonorrhea.

Signs and Symptoms

The reproductive tract of women includes the fallopian tube, uterus, cervix and vagina. However, it is the vas deferens, testes, penis and urinogenital opening in men.

Initially, reproductive tract infection causes no symptoms, but as infection increases, symptoms appear, and medical advice to contain it becomes necessary.

Symptoms in Women	Symptoms in Men
• Pain in the lower abdomen • Pain and burning sensation during urination • Foul-smelling vaginal discharge • Irregular and painful periods • Painful intercourse • Inflammation and ulcers, and swelling in the vagina area • Fever in chronic cases	• Burning sensation and pain during urination • Tenderness in the groin • Lesions on penis • Itching in the genital area • Pus discharge from the urethra • Ulcers, rash and swelling around the genitals • Fever in acute cases

Fig. 13.4 Symptoms of women and men

Transmission

Infections are due to microbes like certain fungi, bacteria, viruses, etc. The infective agents pass

1. from the infected partner to the uninfected partner during intercourse.
2. from an infected mother to her child before or after birth.
3. through blood transfusion, as in the case of the bacteria causing syphilis.
4. during unsafe abortion

5. due to a lack of menstrual hygiene.

Prevention of infection can be ensured through -

- No unprotected intercourse with an infected partner or a person of unknown credentials.
- Avoid multiple partners.
- No continuation of unprotected sex during treatment.
- Seeking specialist doctor's advice upon observation of the symptoms.
- Becoming aware of such infections and insisting on the use of condoms

Notes

Common STI
Gonorrhea and Syphilis

STIs and RTIs increase the risk of getting HIV-AIDS by 8 to 10 times.

Early diagnosis and treatment are necessary

Vulnerability

- Young females with multiple sex partners
- Commercial sex workers and clients
- Sexually active adolescents
- Lack of awareness and ignorance about protected sex.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 13.3

1. What are RTIs and STIs?
2. Name two symptoms each of infections in the reproductive tract in men and women which warrant a visit to a doctor.
3. State two ways of transmission of these infections and two methods of preventing them.

13.4 ACCESS TO FOOD AND TIME TO REST DURING PREGNANCY AND AFTER CHILDBIRTH

Pregnancy is a normal phenomenon in the life of a woman who wishes to have children. However, during pregnancy and soon after childbirth, it becomes necessary to pay attention to a nutritious diet, exercise and adequate rest.

Pregnancy is the time between conception and childbirth when a foetus grows and matures for approximately nine months and ten days in the mother's womb before birth. During this

period nutrition of the mother becomes more important as the foetus's growth depends on the mother's nutrition.

13.4.1 Access to Healthy Food

Access to healthy food and adequate rest is essential for all. Women are generally concerned about the health of their children and their husband and often neglect their health. However, now women are becoming more aware of the need for rest for their own and their baby's health and well-being and that being fit requires a proper diet.

Diet during pregnancy

There are no special diets and no food to be avoided during pregnancy, in general. The best is to eat a balanced diet both during the antenatal and postnatal periods. Listed below are certain 'do's and don'ts. A pregnant mother is required to consume

i) a little more than her regular diet

(ii) light meals in small quantities about 5 or 6 times a day

(iii) fruits and green vegetables in adequate amounts. Green vegetables provide iron and folic acid. They also provide the fibre needed for easy bowel movement.

(iv) a diet that includes carbohydrates (chapatis, rice etc.) and proteins (lentils, egg, meat, etc.), vitamins, minerals and roughage.

(v) Milk or milk products as they provide protein, vitamin D, carbohydrates, fat and mineral such as calcium.

It is advisable to avoid

(i) fried foods frequently and in large quantities

(ii) too much-processed food, canned food and aerrated drinks.

(iii) too much salt and sugar

(iv) too many beverages like tea and coffee.

(v) too much spicy food.

(vi) eating outside food too frequently because a light homemade meal is most easily digested, absorbed and assimilated.

It is crucial to seek the help of a physician to recommend a diet if the pregnant woman is underweight, ailing, or a teenager. It is important to seek the help of a physician to recommend a diet if the pregnant woman is underweight, ailing or a teenager.

Notes

ACTIVITY 13.4

Given below is a table showing the daily dietary requirement (balanced common Indian meal) for pregnant women. Fill in the columns.

Item	Nutrients	Effect on the body

13.4.2 Important ingredients in the diet of pregnant women to avoid common problems

Common complaints in pregnant women are bleeding gums, constipation and flatulence (gas formation in the digestive tract). Increasing levels of Estrogen hormone cause gums to swell and become softer. A diet with sufficient calcium and high-quality proteins prevents problems with gums and teeth.

Constipation happens as hormonal changes relax muscles, including the digestive tract. Consequently, bowel movement becomes less efficient. Fresh vegetables, salads, fresh and dried fruits like raisins, figs, and fruit juice without added sugar are important. Whole grains bread, and cereals increase the amount of fibre in the diet and ease bowel movement. Above all, a lot of water (6+8 glasses daily) and regular walks are helpful for digestion and egestion (elimination of solid waste).

Flatulence can be avoided by eating four to five small meals daily. Food should be chewed well. Spicy or greasy food and intake of coffee should be avoided.

Leg cramps often result from nutritional deficiencies or electrolyte imbalance and strain placed on the legs due to extra weight. Calcium and potassium intake becomes important and is taken care of by eating foods like bananas, cottage cheese (paneer), oranges, almonds, soya products and yoghurt (dahi).

13.4.3 Nutritional health in pregnancy

During pregnancy, more than ever, the mother-to-be needs to have a balanced diet. Our Indian thali is a balanced meal with chapatis or rice providing the carbohydrates, vegetables (sabzi) providing the vitamins and minerals and lentils providing protein and yoghurt (dahi) providing nutrients like calcium and other constituents of food.

The following table gives the important nutrients during pregnancy .

Notes

Diet during Pregnancy

No special diets, no food to avoid in general. The best is to eat a balanced diet which includes

Protein: These build and repair body tissues and form amino acids, enzymes and antibodies. Take at least 50 g of proteins in a day.

Carbohydrates: These are the major source of energy for the growth and maintenance of the body and everyday physical and mental work.

Fats: These provide energy; some fat is essential for protecting the body's vital organs, assisting them in regulating temperature and for good skin. But high-fat diets cause heart disease and obesity.

Vitamins and minerals: These help to regulate metabolism. Vitamins A, D, E and K are fat-soluble vitamins that can be stored in the body, but vitamins B-complex, and C are water-soluble and must be consumed daily.

Minerals are necessary for water balance, glandular secretions, and nerve and muscle responses. In addition, foods containing iron and calcium are essential during pregnancy as iron is needed for building Hb and Ca for bones and teeth.

Nutrients	Benefits	Sources
1. Vitamins B complex and Folic Acids	Prevents deficiencies and chances of congenital disabilities Folic acid keeps skin clear	Green leafy vegetables, peas, chickpeas, and kidney beans
2. Iron	Builds Blood: Important ingredient of Hemoglobin, helps to reduce tiredness and fatigue	Red Meats, fish, poultry, eggs, chickpeas, ground nut, nuts, green leafy vegetables, lentils,
3. Vitamin C	Good for gums – prevents bleeding	Cabbage, lemons, oranges
4. Zinc	Helps in the growth of cells and is important for building proteins, healing damaged tissues and support immune system	Meats, poultry, plant sources like legumes and whole grains
5. Calcium	Necessary for the formation of bones and teeth of a foetus; otherwise, it draws calcium from the mother's bones	Almonds, bananas, cottage Cheese (Paneer), soya products, curds

6. Magnesium	Needed in a small amount to balance calcium	Pumpkin seeds, almonds, spinach, banana, whole milk

13.4.4 Moderate exercise, a nutrition-laden diet and plenty of rest are necessary for a healthy pregnancy. In addition, a pregnant woman should remain active and sleep well.

After the baby is born, liquid diets like juices, milk with Sabudana cooked in it or watery khichdi help form and easily release milk during infant feeding.

Notes

INTEXT QUESTIONS 13.4

1. Why is access to proper nutrition and adequate rest important for pregnant women?
2. Name the nutrients required to build (i) bones and (ii) blood in the foetus. Mention one source of each.
3. How can you remove myths related to gender?

13.5 CULTURAL PRACTICES RELATED TO MATERNAL HEALTH AND REPRODUCTION

In some families in India, a pregnant woman receives a lot of care soon after conception. She is provided with adequate diet and rest and is not allowed to undertake heavy work like lifting, carrying heavy vessels or taking down heavy articles from a height. However, it is necessary for a woman to continue with daily household work that gives enough exercise.

In nuclear families, the women need to be aware of the requirements of pregnancy and take an adequate and nutritious diet, rest and exercise. Moreover, after childbirth, the diet stimulates mammary glands to produce enough milk.

After Childbirth: It is essential to feed the newborn infant the first exudation from the mother's nipples, called COLOSTRUM. Many ignorant elders do not allow this as they think that since it does not look like milk, it has to be discarded by the mother. Colostrum develops immunity in the newborn and should always be given to newborn babies.

In many households, the newborn and the mother are kept in a separate room or place to be away from the main house for 40 days to (a) avoid infections, (b) healing of mother's tender body parts (c) give her adequate rest and (d) time to bond with her baby. However, even if it is impossible to arrange a separate place, it is important to provide a safe, well-lit place for the mother and newborn babies.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 13.5

1. What is Colostrum?
2. What is the cultural practice of 40 days of separation?

13.6 MYTHS AND MISCONCEPTIONS RELATED TO GENDER

Except for the reproductive organ system and reproductive physiology, the anatomy and physiology of a male and female are more or less the same, with minor differences. And yet there are many misconceptions related to the behaviour traits of the two genders. Some of them are given below:

Misconceptions about traits which define Men	Misconceptions about traits which define Women
1. Brave	1. Always scared
2. Naturally dominant	2. Naturally submissive
3. More intelligent	3. Less intelligent
4. Impatient	4. Patient
5. Clever and practical	5. Foolish and sentimental
6. More mature	6. Less mature
7. Independent in thoughts and action	7. Dependent

Both genders can be equally sensitive, caring, and courageous. Parents have to give daughters and sons an equal and enabling environment to grow up healthy.

ACTIVITY 13.5

Tick statements you think are right because of your experience. Then think of instances which disprove these. Record them

Men ought to be wage earners for the family	Women need to be homemakers only and stay home and look after the family

Notes

Men dictate terms	Women submit and obey
Men are aggressive by nature, so boys should be raised to be aggressive	Women are loving and forgiving by nature, so do not empower them
Men are more intelligent and logical	Women are less intelligent and more sentimental, so illogical
Real men never cry	Women cry at the slightest pretext
Men should marry less qualified women	Women should marry more qualified men

These stereotypes can be addressed by creating and promoting alternate views. For example, men can be soft and caring, or they can cry. Many women today take up successful careers and are leaders. Yet, they are emotional and take up challenging jobs.

13.7 THE DECLINING SEX RATIO AND FEMALE FOETICIDE

Performance for a male child affects several girls. In the past, female infanticide was practiced by a few communities. However, in the past few decades, sex-selective abortions have been carried out illegally. This may be due to desire to keep their family size small but ensure that they have sons.

13.7.1 The Sliding Sex ratio continues

For many years the sex ratio (the ratio between men and women) in India has been sliding down in favour of men.

13.7.2 What is Sex ratio?

The sex ratio refers to the number of females per 1000 males. As per the last available census data, the sex ratio in India is 943 females per 1,000 males (2011 Census Report)

The following table shows that the sex ratio has been declining since 1901.

13.7.2 Reasons for 'missing millions'

By now, you know that in our patriarchal society, daughters are deemed a burden on the family. The constitution of India confers equal rights upon women and men. But women are killed even before they are born! This is called 'Female Foeticide' or sex-selective abortion.

Female Foeticide

Foetus is the 'embryo', or the developing young one is a mother's womb. Technology such as Amniocentesis and Chorionic villi testing permits the foetus to be recognised as male or female. Though tests for determining the sex of an unborn child are banned in India, such detections are carried on secretly, and a female foetus is aborted. Again, the abortion or medical termination of pregnancy Act was introduced in 1971, but only under medically approved conditions. And still, illegally female foetuses are aborted in India.

Female infanticide

It is strange that even after so many decades of independence, data shows that female infanticide is a reality even today in several states. The highest rate of under-5 mortality rate (U5MR) has been recorded for Northern India. The factor seen as responsible for the death of 0-4-year-old girls are:

(i) gender bias and inequality

(ii) low economic development

(iii) high fertility

(iv) preference for sons

Rural areas are worst affected due to low levels of education, high population densities, high fertility, and low socio-economic development. Apart from these factors, many deaths of females under five years of age (U5MR) (55 males and 66 females in rural and 51 males and 59 females in urban India in 2011) are due to unwanted childbearing and neglect thereafter.

Prevention of skewed sex ratio due to female foeticide and infanticide is possible if

(a) Practitioners of surreptitious prenatal sex selection are severely punished

(b) Gender discrimination is reduced by imparting awareness.

(c) Girls and women are encouraged to be economically undependable

(d) All girls are educated so that preference for sons is diminished

(e) Various acts favouring women are strictly implemented.

(f) Cases against assaulters are disposed of speedily, and the guilty is adequately punished.

Notes

INTEXT QUESTIONS 13.7

1. What is sex ratio?
2. Give any two reasons for lesser number of girls than boys in India.
3. Suggest two ways of preventing the decline in the sex ratio.

13.8 IMPORTANCE OF VISIBLE SOCIAL CHANGE

Women empowerment

Society, by and large, dictates the roles of two genders, and many succumb to the societal norm though these norms vary from society to society. But these role stereotypes are often discriminatory, and that is why gender studies has become a discipline in itself. Education, employment, and freedom to take decisions indicate women's empowerment.

However, we find today an erosion of stereotypes not only in attire or dresses but also in household work and even vocations and professions. In earlier times, girls/women were not allowed to study much and were married off early. Such was the situation in India's early few decades of the twentieth century. But since then, most parents have been eager to send their daughters to school and college. As a result, many women today are educated and empowered. We have had women leaders as Prime Ministers of the century. As heads of corporate business houses and banks, aircraft flying domains are visible in fields such as wildlife photography. These domains are not untouched by women any longer.

However, since women have been coming out to study or work now, there are many violations of socially accepted norms. The problematic issues of violence occur in many forms, sexual assaults such as sexual abuse and rape; violent assaults like throwing acid, burning or blinding; traumatic experiences of incest and even dowry deaths and murder. Men usually carry out these heinous acts as revenge for refusal to sexually advance or under the influence of alcohol or as an outburst of general frustration. In our country, because of the caste system, there is a horrendous act of honour killing of couples marrying out of the caste. Such acts either kill or cause physical and psychological damage, requiring strict legislation and awareness towards existing laws permitting inter-caste and interreligious marriage in India.

13.9 IMPACT ON MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH OF MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN LIVING AS UNEQUAL

For thousands of years, the society has been structured so that women remain conventionally bound to fulfil certain roles and obligations. Women's roles are perceived as less important

Notes

than those of men. Men thus dominate over women. When the dominant group maltreats the subordinate group, social problems arise. A need arises to advocate a 'Power Balance' between the two genders. The conflict between men and women still exists though the Constitution of India provides equality for men and women, including voting rights since independence.

The gender conflict is considerable because men, as bread earners, have control over wealth and finances and consequently control over resources, and women are dependent on men. This hold on finances by men in households often causes gender conflict among couples. But conflict, for the same reason, exists between employer and employee, the rich and the poor. In addition, there can be a conflict between generations which though not of much consequence in the west, has relevance in Asian societies where the 'joint family' system still exists.

13.9.1 The Gender Conflict

The conflict between man and woman has many underlying reasons. Though both partners together need to raise a family, more often than not, the task of looking after daily household tasks and taking care of infants is delegated to the woman. Men are supposed to go out and earn money to run the household. However, in modern times when many women are educated, they go out to work and earn and do cooking, cleaning, washing and bringing up children. Certainly, however, in some households, men lend a helping hand to the women in domestic chores and child care.

13.9.2 Factors leading to gender conflict

There are various reasons why women are still subjugated by men. This leads to tensions and conflict in the family and society. The reasons for gender conflict where it exists are as follows:

- Gender discrimination and gender stereotypes.
- Patrilineal society and Patriarchy
- Poverty and discrimination
- Dowry system
- Domestic violence
- Literacy and lack of women's rights

Gender discrimination and poverty: In many families, especially in rural areas, a girl suffers discrimination right from birth. The birth of a girl is not celebrated, but there is a lot of jubilation when a boy is born. As she grows up, the brother is given better food, much more love and much less family responsibility. He is also sent to a better, more expensive school than his sister.

Notes

Girls are married off early in age, even before completing their education. In low-income families, girls are married to widowers or older men so that no dowry is needed. The wife often has no say in the spacing of childbirths. Infertile women are cursed and polarised, and even if the husband has a problem, she is blamed as a 'barren woman' and not welcome to participate in wedding rituals. The enlightened families, however, get medical done for both men and women. But even reproductive technologies like intrafallopian transfer of zygote or GIFT and ZIFT primarily need to be done on women because they bear the developing embryo.

In rural areas, woman take food for the men working in fields and fetch water and fuel like dry sticks and wood from the forest. As a result, they suffer not only the drudgery but also bear the weight of water or fuel as they carry them on their heads or in arms and walk long distances.

Patrilineal society and Patriarchy

- Except in some communities in Kerala and Nagaland and among certain tribes, Indian society is patriarchal, i.e. authority is with the males. Children take the father's surname, and sons continue the family line. A woman changes her maiden name upon getting married and bears the name of her spouse's family.
- Even though the law provides for an equal share in the parental property and assets, daughters are often not given their due. They are also exploited by not being given the right to hold or dispose the property. Brothers often deprive the sisters of ancestral property, leaving them to fight for their rights at the cost of losing the brother-sister bond.
- In agriculture and labor-intensive construction-related jobs, wages of men and women vary, and women may be paid even less than the minimum wages prescribed by the Government. Poverty and illiteracy force women to refrain from fighting for their rights.

Dowry: In a patriarchal society, a girl leaves her parental house to live with the in-laws. The parental family gives her gifts as she leaves her parental home. But when the husband and his family demand money and expensive gifts from the girl's family, it becomes 'dowry'. The temptation does not stop after the wedding, and the demand for dowry may even lead to domestic violence on the girl and even her death. The Dowry Prohibition Act is to prevent such violence against women.

13.9.3 Impact of gender inequality on men, women and children

We have read in the earlier section about gender dynamics and family conflicts partially. Such conflict ruins the entire family. Men, if confronted by their wives, resort to domestic violence. Often an everyday altercation with the wife affects work at the workplace. On the other hand, the wife may go into depression and even vent her concealed anger on the children. As a

result, the children grow up unhappy. The atmosphere in the home keeps away adolescent children who may even resort to the use of drugs or other misdoings.

Since independence, the Government made arrangements for girls to go to school. Recently the Government has made it mandatory for all schools to have separate toilets for girls, both in schools situated in urban and rural areas. With education, girls are becoming increasingly aware and shall make better mothers and take informed decisions. Many laws on gender equality exist in India. The provision to improve women's status started even before India became free, and new laws are enacted as per the emerging needs of the society to empower women and enhance gender equality.

Notes

1829: Prohibition of Sati (Raja Ram Mohan Roy)

The Hindu widow Remarrige Act, 1856

The child marrige Act, 1929

The Hindu marriage Act, 1955

The Hindu Succession Act, 1956

- Protection of women from domestic violence Act, 2005
- Sexual harassment of women at workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redrenal) Act, 2013 Dowry prohibition Act, 1961

INTEXT QUESTIONS 13.9

1. Explain in a sentence or two the following terms.
   (i) Female Foeticide
   (ii) Gender Conflict
2. Mention any three acts/laws in our country favouring women.
3. What is dowry? Why has it been banned through an act?

WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

- Physical, mental and emotional changes during puberty and adolescence.
- Puberty is the stage in life which begins at age ten and merges with the stage termed

Notes

adolescence. In girls, puberty begins with breast development and the onset of menstruation at adolescence. Boys of the same age begin to grow a moustache and have cracked voices. Both show growth spurt with increased height, muscle strength and brain size. Apart from physical changes, adolescents build up friendships and exceptional bonds.

- All the above changes that occur are due to hormonal changes.
- During adolescence impact of a peer group is high, and important for adolescents to make informed choices about friends and acquaintances.
- Adolescents may fall prey to temptations like substance abuse, and curiosity about sexual changes may lead to sexual abuse due to ignorance. Adolescents have to learn to say No to undue advances and distinguish between a good and a bad touch.
- Substance abuse over consumption of intoxicating substances for feeling good and not as a medicine and then becoming tolerant to it and ultimately addicted to it. Commonly abused substances are Amphetamines, Barbiturates, Codein, Cough syrup etc. The effects of continuous drug abuse lead to a total breakdown of normal life.
- A woman requires normal health and fitness for herself and the growing foetus during pregnancy and childbirth. The diet should include food items which provide protein, carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals to prevent commonly occurring problems.
- The sex ratio is the number of girls per 1000 boys. In our country, the sex ratio has been in favour of males, but the scenario is changing now.
- There is, however, a social change now in attire, diet, better transport and communication facilities, and above all, more and more women are getting educated and employed. Many women are in professions not taken up by women 20-30 years ago.
- Gender conflict is still there and impacts men, women and children.

TERMINAL EXERCISE

1. Define puberty and adolescence and list three changes in adolescence which are different n boys and girls. Add a note on challenges faced by girls during adolescence.
2. Explain these terms: (i) substance abuse (ii) Sexual abuse (iii) RTI and STI
3. List the detrimental effects of drug abuse.

Notes

4. Give an account of the diet necessary during pregnancy and after childbirth.

5. What is the sex ratio? State reasons for a declined sex ratio in our country and how it may be rectified.

6. What is meant by social change in society? Mention five changes you have noticed.

ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

13.1

1. World Health Organization (WHO) defines adolescence as ages between 10-19years.

2. Physical differences such as facial hair in adolescent boys and development of breasts in girls are distinguishing features between adolescent boys and girls.

3. Gender discrimination puts the girls at a disadvantage and may hinder their physical and mental development. Gender stereotypes also adversely impact the self-esteem of adolescents.

13.2

1. Proper and adequate nutrition along with physical exercise are the two factors necessary for good health during adolescence

2. Teenagers are not mentally or psychologically mature enough to shoulder the responsibilities of parenthood. Also teenage girl's uterus is still developing and a pregnancy may expose them to health risks like anemia and prolonged labor which may damage the reproductive tract.

3. Bulimia nervous: Periods of overeating and later vomiting due to fear of weight gain and Anorexia: Extreme dieting, fasting and over-exercising to prevent weight gain

13.3

1. RTI and STI are two abbreviations for Reproductive Tract Infection and Sexually Transmitted Infections such as Syphilis and Gonorrhea.

2. For women, symptoms like pain and burning sensation during urination and foul-smelling vaginal discharge warrant a visit to the doctor. For men also, burning

sensation and pain during urination along with tenderness in the groin should be checked with doctor.

3. Infections can be transferred through from the infected partner to the uninfected partner during intercourse and from an infected mother to her child before or after birth. Using proper protection and avoiding multiple partners are two ways of preventing them.

13.4

1. Proper nutrition and rest are important for pregnant women to safe and healthy development of foetus because the growth of foetus depends on mother's nutritional status and physical condition.

2. i) Nutrient to build bones in calcium. It is found in milk and milk products like cottage cheese (paneer)

   ii) Iron is important for hemoglobin (blood) and is found in green leafy vegetables.

3. Myths related to gender are not easy to remove and require that we work on them continuously by avoiding gender discrimination and eliminating ill-practices like female foeticide, child marriage, dowry etc. Another way to remove myths related to gender is to encourage parents to educate their girls while giving a loving, nurturing and safe environment to their children to explore their personalities.

13.5

1. Colostrum is the first exudation from mother's nipples which is extremely important for newborns as it gives them immunity.

2. Many cultures practice 40days of separation where the mother and her newborn are kept in a separate room to avoid infections, and give adequate rest to the mother for healing and time to bond with her child.

13.6

1. There are several behavioral misconceptions related to the two genders some of which prescribe that men are brave while women are always scared, men are naturally dominant while women are naturally submissive, men are practical while

women are sentimental. However, these misconceptions need to be corrected as both genders can be sensitive and courageous.

13.7

1. Sex ratio refers to the number of females per 1000 males in a given population.
2. Preference for son and associated female foeticide lead to lesser number of girls than boys in India.
3. Strict punishment for those who practice in female foeticide and improving the status of women through education and employment can prevent decline in sex ratio.

Notes

13.8

1. The three things that indicate women empowerment are education, empowerment and agency to take independent decisions.
2. Gender bias and inequality, low economic development, high fertility and preference for sons are some of the factors that contribute to female infanticide
3. Skewed sex-ratio can be improved by reducing gender discrimination against women and girls, improving girls education so that preference for son is diminished and strictly punishing those engaged in female foeticide and infanticide.

13.9

1. i. Female Foeticide is the practice of terminating unborn female foetus due to preference for a male child

   ii. Gender Conflict occurs due to culturally defined roles of men and women, where men due to being chief wage earners control the finances and women become dependent on them. Patriarchy, gender discrimination and stereo-types are some of the reasons for gender conflict in family and society.

2. Three laws/ acts in our country favouring women are:

   a) The Hindu wodow remmarriage Act, 1856 The Hindu succession Act, 1956

Notes

b) Hindu Succession Act on inheritance right to sons and daughters (1956), and

c) Anti-dowry prohibition Act, 1961

3. When the groom and his family demand money and gifts from the bride's family as a part of marriage it is called dowry. This temptation is one of the ills of patriarchy and has often lead to violence against women. Hence, dowry has been banned in India through the Anti-dowry Act of 1976.

14

HEALTH POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

Health is a basic human right. A healthy body is important for individuals to live a good and healthy life. The government ensures that good quality health care is available to all sections of the population. There are special programmes and policies that are directed towards ensuring and protecting the weaker sections of the population. The vulnerable sections of the population are often denied access to health care. This could be because they do not have enough money or perhaps their status in the family is low. This is particularly true for women. We often see that women in well to do families are the last to get medical help if needed. Their health is often neglected and overlooked by the society. In order to ensure that women are healthy, the Government of India has special programmes that are directed at ensuring their wellbeing. This lesson will explain the concept of health and policies and programmes for achieving goals of people's health in the country.

OUTCOMES

After studying this lesson, learner:

- explains the existing health system
- identifies health services and programmes for women
- advocates and assist community in accessing various health services

14.1 UNDERSTANDING HEALTH

According to the World Health Organisation, “Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” This means that health is multidimensional and not just physical. It is important to understand the different dimensions of health. These are

- **Physical-** The body has to be physically healthy and free from disease.

Notes

- **Mental-** The person should be mentally healthy and should not be depressed or suffering from anxiety or other mental health issues.
- **Social-** Social factors like economic and social status also determine your health. For example, women in the family have a low status so they may not get access to nutritious food or they may be overworked doing household chores.

Thus, health is not just the absence of disease. Just because you do not have a disease does not mean that you are healthy. You could be malnourished because you do not have nutritious food to eat. Malnutrition is not just the loss of body weight but it could also lead to obesity. Malnourishment could be because a person is too poor to eat a balanced diet. So, such a person may have more rice or chapatis and less vegetables, dal, milk, eggs and fruits etc. which make the diet balanced. The person should also be able to live in clean surroundings. If they are living in unclean surroundings like for example in a slum, they may not have clean drinking water, sewage and sanitation facilities. This could lead to water borne diseases like cholera.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 14.1

1. How is health defined?
2. How is the status of an individual socially determined?

ACTIVITY 14.1

Talk to the women in your neighbourhood and find out if they suffer from anaemia. Also find out what and when they eat. Use the chart below. (The symptoms of anemia include a body ache, feeling of tiredness, nausea, yellowish nails and insides of the eyes.)

TIME	FOOD EATEN
Early Morning	
Breakfast	
Mid- Morning	
Lunch	
Evening	

Notes

Dinner

Any other

14.2 HEALTH SYSTEM

The health system of a country refers to the health care system or the health services system. Through the health care system, the government aims at some of the following:

- Reducing mortality
- Reducing morbidity
- Controlling population growth
- Increasing life expectancy
- Better nutrition
- Providing basic sanitation facilities
- Ensuring enough health personnel to deliver health services

It is binding on the government to work towards providing health care to its citizens. The constitution charges every state with "raising the level of nutrition and the standard of living of its people and the improvement of public health as among its primary duties". Policy makers articulate the health needs of the population. The various stakeholders like the government, civil society, academia, civil servants, researchers and doctors contribute on policy making for achieving goals for health of the people in a country. They provide guidelines for the government to address the health needs of the population.

The health care delivery system includes medical personnel as well as administrators to ensure a smooth, better and equitable access to all sections of the population. The health centers and hospitals exist at the village, block and district levels. These also have different levels of specialisation. At the village level, the doctors and the health workers give primary care to people. More specialised care is available at the block level and the nearby cities through Civil hospitals where a patient can also consult medical specialists. The hierarchy of the health delivery system also includes teaching hospitals where medical care is available. Figure 14.1 illustrates the different levels of health care institutions.

Figure 14.1 : The Hierarchy of Health Care Delivery System

ACTIVITY 14.2

Find out the population that is looked after by each level of the health structure.

14.2 NATIONAL HEALTH POLICY (NHP)

In order to ensure that the population is healthy, the government has special programmes for its citizens. The health of women in a society has always been a matter of concern. In order to ensure that the women are healthy the government of India has several programmes specific to women. India had a National Health Policy (NHP) which was formulated in 1983, in 2002 and then again in 2017. In 2017, the NHP aimed at attaining the highest level of health and

wellbeing for all ages. Since 2017, the private sector has also become an important stakeholder in achieving the health of a population. NHP 2017 was guided by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set by the UN General Assembly in 2015.

The state and the central governments play an important role in implementing the policy guidelines in a planned manner. In the States and Union territories in India, the programmes are implemented at the district, block and village levels and also in the urban areas.

The NHP 2017 also proposed the opening of health and wellness centres for providing preventive, curative and rehabilitative services for all. The NHP aims at achieving

- Better health services for all
- Interlinking health policies with other developmental policies. Thus, recognising that health is multidimensional as we have discussed in Section 14.1
- Access to better health care services
- Lowering expenditures on health
- Lowering Mortality from non-communicable diseases like cancer, cardiovascular diseases, respiratory issues and diabetes.

Indigenous Systems of Medicine (AYUSH)

The NHP also focusses on providing indigenous health care through Ayurveda (A), Yoga & Naturopathy (Y), Unani (U), Siddha (S) and Homeopathy (H)- also known by the acronym AYUSH. The practitioners of these systems of medicine became a part of the primary health care in 2005. In 2021, the Government of India has set up the Ministry of AYUSH to propagate, promote and encourage the traditional systems of health.

Ayushman Bharat – Pradhan Mantri Jan Aarogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) 23rd September, 2018

National Health Protection Mission

This is scheme targeting poor and vulnerable families. It will cover the Rashtriya Bima Yojna (RSBY) and the Senior Citizen Health Insurance Scheme (SCHIS)

The benefits of the scheme can be availed in the public an private sector.

It is meant to increase health coverage and benefit people.

The two components of AB include

1. Health and wellness Centres, (ABHWC), providing universal, free, primary health care.
2. Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, (PMJAY) providing secondary and tertiary hospital care to the vulnerable

Notes

INTEXT QUESTIONS 14.2

1. When were the National Health Policies formulated?

2. What is AYUSH?

14.3 WOMEN AND HEALTH

Women play an important role in the overall progress of a country. The Government of India has initiated several plans for improving the health status of women. These include National Health Programmes for combating communicable diseases (See Box 14.1). These also include programmes directed at promoting health through better nutrition, better sanitation and an overall focus on improving the health of women (see Box 14.2). These programmes are often supported by international agencies like WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA and World Bank.

Let us look at some of the health indicators for women in Table 14.1

Indicator	**NFHS V 2019- 21**	**NFHS IV 2015-16**
Sex Ratio	1020	991
Women married before the age of 18 years	23.3	26.8
Total Fertility Rate (Children per woman)	2	2.2
Use of Family planning Methods (%)	66.7	53.5
Health Worker Ever Talked to Female Non Users About Family Planning (%)	23.9	17.7
Infant Mortality Rate (IMR)	35.2	40.7
Women whose BMI is below normal (%)	18.7	22.9
Women who are overweight and Obese	22.9	18.9
All women who are Anaemic 15-49 years (%)	57.0	53
Adolescent Girls (15-19 Years who are Anaemic (%)	59.1	54.1

Table 14.1 Some Health Indicators for Women

Source: NFHS V

Notes

Table 14.1 tells us that the health of women has improved in some areas. Sex ratio i.e., the number of women per 1000 men has improved from 991 to 1020. The Total Fertility Rate that is the average number of children born per woman has declined from 2.2 in 2015-16 to 2.0 in 2019-20 21. This has been possible since there has been an increase in the use of modern family planning methods. The use of modern family planning methods has increased from 47.8% in 2015-16 to 56.5% in 2019-21. Also, the percentage of health workers talking to women has increased from 17.7% in 2015-16 to 23.9% in 2019- 21.

BOX 14.1

Mission Indradhanush

Launched in 2014

To boost the routine immunisation coverage

- Mission Indradhanush
- Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI)
- Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI) 2.0

However, the health of women still needs to be better. The Sex ratio at birth, which is an indicator of the desirability of daughters, according to UNFPA, State of World Population Report, 2020 is 910. This is amongst the lowest in the world. The number of obese women has also increased from 18.9% to 22.9%. Anemia has increased from 53% to 57%. and from 54.1 % in adolescent girls to 59.1%. Anemia is the condition in which the blood's capacity to carry oxygen decreases. Due to this the person feels weak, dizzy and tired. This is also linked to nutritional deficiencies such as deficiency of iron, vitamin B12, vitamin A, & folates, The prevalence of infectious diseases including malaria, tuberculosis & HIV also lead to anemia.

Low Birth weight and low body weight and deficiencies in adoloscenec

- Weak childhood and adoloscence
- Frequently ill
- Possible anaemia

Notes

When she attains adulthood she repeats the history of her mother

- Weak adult
- The cycle is repeated

Figure 14.2 Understanding the Health of Women

INTEXT QUESTIONS 14.3

1. What is meant by TFR?
2. What is the difference between sex ratio and sex ration at birth?

14.4 HEALTH SERVICES AND PROGRAMMES FOR WOMEN

In the earlier section 14.2 we have discussed the National Health Policy. The NHP also has some provisions for women. The focus of the NHP for women is on

- Addressing maternal health
- Health needs of women beyond 40+ years
- Making public health hospitals more women friendly and gender sensitive.

BOX 14.2

Some other schemes & programmes Reproductive, Maternal, Neonatal, Child and Adolescent health.

- Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakaram (JSSK)
- Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram(RKSK)
- Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK)
- Universal Immunisation Programme
- Mission Indradhanush (MI)
- Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY)
- Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan (PMSMA)
- Navjaat Shishu Suraksha Karyakram (NSSK)
- National Programme for Family planning
- LaQshya' programme (Labour Room Quality Improvement Initiative)

Notes

National Nutritional Programmes

- National Iodine Deficiency Disorders Control Programme
- MAA (Mothers' Absolute Affection) Programme for Infant and Young Child Feeding
- National Programme for Prevention and Control of Fluorosis (NPPCF)
- National Iron Plus Initiative for Anaemia Control

The government in order to combat diseases has several programmes for combating illness. These programmes are administered by the health services

- National Health Mission 2005
- National Rural Health Mission 2005
- National Urban Health Mission 2013
- Reproductive Maternal Newborn Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCH +A) 2013
- Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram (JSSK) 2011
- Menstrual Hygiene Scheme 2005
- Ayushman Bharat - National Health Protection Mission (see box 14..1)

14.4.1 National Health Mission 2005

The National Health Mission was launched in 2005 with a view to improving the health status of people in India, specially those who were in the vulnerable sections of society. It seeks to provide access to affordable, universal and good quality healthcare to all people. The focus is also on the reduction of child and maternal deaths and maintaining population, stabilisation, gender and demographic balance. The focus areas of NHM are

- Reproductive Health
- Maternal Health
- Newborn child and Adolescent Health (RMNCH+ A) (See 14.3.3)

As the name suggests, the focus is on addressing causes of mortality among women and children and also amongst adolescent, both in rural and urban areas. The earlier programmes namely NRHM and NUHM were merged and the new programme was called NHM.

14.4.2 National Rural Health Mission 2005

NRHM was launched to provide equitable, affordable and good health care to vulnerable sections of society. The mission was focused on the following critical factors.

Notes

- Funds were allocated to strengthen medical institutions at all levels from the sub-centres to the civil hospitals.
- Strengthening the on- going disease control programme
- New programmes for control of non- communicable diseases
- Integrated disease surveillance project
- It aimed to encourage early registration of pregnancies and institutional deliveries.
- Incentives were offered to couples to have daughters and to go in for institutional deliveries so that maternal mortality rates could be reduced.
- The introduction of the Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA). The ASHAs are local women trained to act as health educators and promoters in their communities (See Box 14.3).
- Under the NRHM Village Health, Sanitation and Nutrtion Committees (VHSC) were set up.
- The members included the sarpanch, the lady panch, ANM, AWW, ASHA and members of the village from all castes. The VHSNC is independent of the government and is a voluntary body of all stakeholders.

14.4 INTEXT QUESTIONS

1. What is the focus of NHP?
2. Who are the ASHA workers?

14.5 PROGRAMMES FOR MATERNAL HEALTH

In this section, we will look at some programme start have been formulated by the government at different points.

14.5.1 Reproductive Maternal Neonatal, Child And Adolescent Health (RMNCH+A)

RMNCH +A approach as it is called, was launched in 2013 and it is not just focused on women but also on adolescent women and newborn health.It essentially looks at the causes of mortality among women and children. It is also directed at ensuring that women have timely access to healthcare and there is no delay in reaching a doctor or other health care practitioners. It links maternal and child health to reproductive health during adolescent and further.

The other programmes looking at maternal health include

- Janani Suraksha Yojana, JSY i.e. safe motherhood program

Notes

- Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram JSSK i.e. safe mother and child program.

Both these programs are directed towards looking after the health of the mother and the child in an interlinked manner. They look after prenatal, antenatal and postnatal care of the mother and of the infant. Under those programmes, there is a focus on

- Ensuring that there is complete immunisation of the pregnant mother.
- Adequate nutrition during pregnancy
- Safe and free transport to the place of delivery,
- Presence of a skilled birth attendant at the time of birth
- Looking after the newborn infant.

14.5.2 Mother and Child Tracking System (MCTS)

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare launched the Mother and Child Tracking System (MCTS) in December 2009 in order to ensure complete medical care to pregnant women and full immunisation for children. The MCTS utilises information technology and tracks the details of every pregnancy in the country in a centralised database. It provides information of different health services received at the individual level, by monitoring all service deliveries that an individual benefits from MCTS. The focus is on registering and tracking every pregnant woman, new nate, infant and child by name and ensuring that they have adequate care. Till July 2017, more than 1.25 crore pregnant women and 10.78 crore children had been registered under the MCTS. MCTS not only tracks and monitors all pregnant women. But also ensures that there is full immunisation of all children as per schedule.

BOX 14.3 Communicable Disease Programmes

The Government of India has the following communicable Disease Programmes

1. National Vector Borne Diseases Control Programme like malaria control
2. Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme for controlling tuberculosis.
3. National Leprosy Eradication Programme for eliminating leprosy.
4. National AIDS Control Programme for controlling the spread of AIDS.
5. Universal Immunisation Programme for immunising children and pregnant women.
6. Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme for an overall monitoring of the spread of diseases.

BOX 14.5 Non-Communicable Diseases Programmes

1. National Cancer Control Program
2. National Mental Health Program
3. National Diabetes Control Program
4. National Program for Control and treatment of Occupational Diseases
5. National Program for Control of Blindness
6. National Program for control of diabetes, cardiovascular disease and stroke
7. National Programme for prevention and control of deafness

14.5.3 Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMVV)

In 2017, the Government of India launched the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana, PMVV, also called the Maternity Benefit Programme. Under the scheme Rs.6000/ in cash is provided to pregnant and lactating women over 19 years of age.

14.5.4 Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritava Abhiyan, (PMSMA)

BOX 14.4 Communicable Disease Programmes

The Government of India has the following communicable Disease Programmes

1. National Vector Borne Diseases Control Programme like malaria control
2. Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme for controlling tuberculosis.
3. National Leprosy Eradication Programme for eliminating leprosy.
4. National AIDS Control Programme for controlling the spread of AIDS.
5. Universal Immunisation Programme for immunising children and pregnant women.
6. Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme for an overall monitoring of the spread of diseases.

BOX 14.5 Non-Communicable Diseases Programmes

1. National Cancer Control Program
2. National Mental Health Program
3. National Diabetes Control Program
4. National Program for Control and treatment of Occupational Diseases

Notes

5. National Program for Control of Blindness
6. National Program for control of diabetes, cardiovascular disease and stroke
7. National Programme for prevention and control of deafness

14.5.3 Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMVV)

In 2017, the Government of India launched the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana, PMVV, also called the Maternity Benefit Programme. Under the scheme Rs.6000/ in cash is provided to pregnant and lactating women over 19 years of age.

14.5.4 Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritava Abhiyan, (PMSMA)

The *praadhan Mantri Surakshit Matritava Abhiyan,* PMSMA has also been launched in 2016 to ensure quality care to pregnant women. The programme aims to provide the following

- A minimum package of antenatal care services to women in the second and third trimesters of pregnancy at the government health facilities.
- A systematic approach which involves the private sector for developing strategies to generate awareness amongst pregnant women.

14.5.5 Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram, (JSSK) 2011

As the name suggests, the programme is directed towards pregnant women and ensuring that they have access to government health facilities. The scheme was started in 2011 to reduce out-of-pocket expenditure for both pregnant women and infants. The scheme is directed towards ensuring that more and more women opt for institutional deliveries. There is a focus on free and cashless delivery. In 2014, the programme was extended to all antenatal and postnatal complications related to pregnancy. It was also extended to cover all complications faced by newborn and infants up to 1 year of age. It is applicable in both rural and urban areas. Under the JSSK, the government ensures

- Free and cashless delivery.
- Free drugs and other consumables
- Free diet during the stay in the health institution
- Free provision of blood if needed
- Free transport between facilities in case a woman at the sub centre needs to be referred to the primary health centre or to the civil hospital.
- Free drop back from the institution to the home

Notes

BOX 14.6 ASHAs (Accredited Social Health Activist)

The Indian Ministry of Health and Family Welfare describes ASHA as:

health activist(s) in the community who will create awareness on health and its social determinants and mobilize the community towards local health planning and increased utilization and accountability of the existing health services.

Their tasks include

- motivating women to give birth in hospitals
- bringing children to immunization clinics
- encouraging family planning (e.g., surgical sterilization)
- treating basic illness and injury with first aid
- keeping demographic records
- improving village sanitation.

ASHAs must primarily be female residents of the village that they have been selected to serve. ASHAs must have class eight education or higher, preferably be between the ages of 25 and 45 years.

14.5.6 Surakshit Matritva Aashwasan (SUMAN)

The Government of India has recently launched Surakshit Matritva Aashwasan (SUMAN) to provide affordable care to women and new borns. Under the Ayushman Bharat Scheme the Government of India ahas a special focus on reducing gender discrimination. The scheme in addition to the ASHA workers and the Multi Purpose Workers has also now introduced more female health providers at the AB- HWCs. The focus is also on increasing awareness among women. There have been efforts like Beti Bachao-Beti Padhao and Ujjwala,

INTEXT QUESTIONS 14.5

1. What are the different programmes for ensuring maternal health?
2. What is the primary focus of JSSK?

14.6 PROGRAMMES FOR ADOLESCENTS

An adolescent is of the agr group of 10-19 years. Adolescent health has a direct impact on maternal health. The Government has some programme that are specifically directed at adolescents. Some of these are discussed in this section

14.6.1 ARSH- Adolescent Reproductive and Sexual Health Program

This program is directed towards looking after the health of adolescent (10-19 years) . The focus is on monitoring their growth, development, behavioural problems and any other health issues that they might face. There is also counselling provided for the adolescent.

14.6.2 Sathiya Scheme

This scheme is linked to the ARSH. The Sathiya scheme was launched by the Government of India in collaboration with the UNFPA, for educating adolescents on gender, sexuality and consent. It works on the pattern of sathiya meaning friends. The sathiya are expected to impart age appropriate knowledge on adolescent health issues and also to address issues like safe sex and masturbation.

14.6.3 Menstrual Hygiene Scheme

This scheme was launched in 2011 and is directed towards promoting menstrual hygiene among adolescent girls. The programme ensures that there is a regular supply of sanitary napkins to ensure that there are no health problems for women. It also enables measures like access to water and toilets in schools for girls.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 14.6

1. What is the full form of ARSH?
2. What is the Menstrual Hygiene Scheme?

ACTIVITY

Find out the ASHA worker in your village. Interview her and find out the problems that she faces.

WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

In this lesson the focus has been on understanding women's health. We have tried to understand women's health from the point of view of various health programmes of the Government of India. We have also learnt how the health of a woman is linked to her physical, social and mental health.

TERMINAL EXERCISE

1. Define health. (Hint: WHOs definition)
2. Explain the NHM.
3. What is the MCTS?
4. What is ARSH? Explain its importance for maternal health.
5. Explain in detail how the Government of India encourages institutional deliveries.

GLOSSARY

Fertility: Fertility is the natural capability to produce offspring. As a measure, "fertility rate" is the number of offspring born per mating pair, individual or population. Fertility differs from fecundity, which is defined as the *potential* for reproduction. A lack of fertility is infertility while a lack of fecundity would be called sterility.

Mortality: A measure of the number of deaths in a given population

Morbidity: A diseased state, disability, or poor health

ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

14.1

1. According to the World Health Organisation, "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."
2. Social factors like your economic and social status also determine your health. For example women in the family have a low status so they may not get access to nutritious food or they may be overworked doing household chores.

14.2

1. Indias National Health Policies (NHP) were formulated in the year1983, in 2002 and then again in 2017.
2. The NHP also focusses on providing indigenous health care through Ayurveda (A), Yoga & Naturopathy (Y), Unani (U), Sidha (S) and Homeopathy (H)- also known by the acronym AYUSH.

Notes

14.3

1. The Total Fertility Rate that is the average number of children born per woman

2. Sex ratio refers to the number of women per 1000 men. Sex ratio at birth refers to the number of girls born per 1000 boys.

14.4

1. The focus of the NHP for women is on

   - Addressing maternal health
   - Health needs of women beyond 40+ years
   - Making public health hospitals more women friendly and gender sensitive.

2. The introduction of the Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA). The ASHAs are local women trained to act as health educators and promoters in their communities

14.5

1. The programmes that ensure maternal health are:

1. RMNCH+A
2. MCTS
3. JSSK
4. PMSMA

2. The scheme was started in 2011 to reduce out-of-pocket expenditure for both pregnant women and infants. The scheme is directed towards ensuring that more and more women opt for institutional deliveries

14.6

1. ARSH- Adolescent Reproductive and Sexual Health Program

2. The programme ensures that there is a regular supply of sanitary napkins to ensure that there are no health problems for women. It also enables measures like access to water and toilets in schools for girls

MODULE -5

Gender and Law

This module acquaints the learner with the various family laws: dowry, marriage and Divorce. The module seeks to make aware the learner about various laws and identify their potential in guarding the dignity and safety of women and children. The learner gets an exposure to various labour laws india and it's importance for gender justice.

15. Family Laws: Dowry, Marriage and Divorce

16. Laws for Women's Safety and Security

17. Gender and Labour Laws

15

FAMILY LAWS: DOWRY, MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

We all know that certain laws address family matters and domestic relations in India. These are family laws that are different for every community, such as Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Parsis or Jews. These family laws are concerned with legal issues involving family relationships, *viz*., matrimony, divorce, maintenance of children, spouse and parents, adoption, succession, and custody of children. These days, the joint family system is more or less replaced by a nuclear family, which has changed the values, norms and structure of the family as an institution. Traditional thinking is giving way to new ideas and practices. The advent of technology in our lives and the use of the internet and social platforms to connect and communicate have changed the rules of communication within the family. In this lesson, you will understand the new challenges faced by the family, the norms of marriage that are under going a change. Therefore, you will also be able to understand the need for new laws to address the new kind of challenges such as divorce, demand for dowry and legality of marriage, and the enacting various family laws being.

OUTCOMES

After completing this lesson, learner:

- knows the legal age of marriage.
- appreciates the legal validation of marriage through registration.
- acquaints with different family laws.
- explains the new problems and challenges of family and its legal solutions.

The Constitution of India provides gender equality through Articles 14 and 15. It prohibits "discrimination on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth"[1]. Gender justice revolves around gender equality. It evolves strategies to (Article 15) the society, where every

Notes

human is treated equally irrespective of gender. It necessarily involves shifting from arbitrariness to a justified, balanced, fair relationship within society. It, hence, aims to challenge inequality and provide equal opportunities to both sexes in every field.

15.1 MARRIAGE LAWS IN INDIA

In India, there are several laws that come separately under the marriage and family laws. These refer to determining the age of marriage as well as the process of its legal registration in different communities.

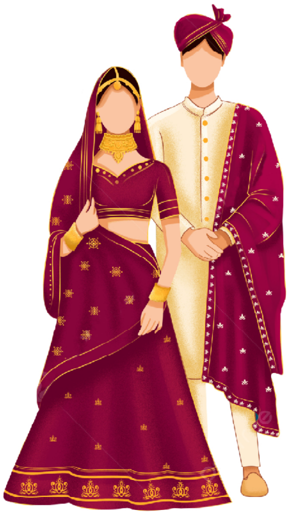


Figure 15.1 Marriage: A Social Institution

15.1.1 Institution of Marriage

Let us understand the social and legal meaning of marriage. Marriage is a social union between spouses that establishes rights and obligations between the two. It has different meanings in different cultures and religions, but typically, marriage is an institution in which interpersonal relations are acknowledged or sanctioned along with family ties. Marriages are performed in different societies, cultures, and religions differently. A marriage is said to be valid only if it is recognized by the law of the state.

Marriages are sacramental under Hindu law. The word sacramental means that it is sacrosanct, inviolable and immutable. Muslim law considers marriage as a civil contract. Parsi marriage is also like a civil contract brought into existence after a religious ceremony called "Aashirwad". Marriage between Jews is also a contract called "Katuba".

In India, marriage can be solemnized between two people where the male is above 21 years of age respectively. In case of contravention, the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 provides for the punishment of simple imprisonment exceeding15 days or with fine which may extend to 1000 or both. Child marriage is prohibited in India. Earlier, the "Child Marriage Restrained Act, 1929" prohibited child marriage. However, this law has been replaced with a new enactment,

Notes

"the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006", which is more effective. There are different laws to justify marriage on a legal basis. Some of these laws are given below:

- **"The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955" as amended by "The Marriage Laws (Amendment) Act, 1976 and 1999":** As per this law, a Hindu marriage is not so much of a religion. It is a result of mutual consent to marriage by either party. For a lawful marriage, the groom must have attained the age of 21 years and the bride must have attained the age of 18 years. The marriage of a maiden and a widow is treated equally.

- **Muslim Personal Law :** Muslim law has not been codified in India. Hence, laws regulating Muslim marriages are mostly based on the interpretation of the holy Quran by scholars. However, Muslim law provides for certain kinds of prohibitions for marriage. For instance, a Muslim is not allowed to marry foster relationships such as a foster mother or the daughter of his foster mother. There are also prohibitions on marriage within the relationship by consanguinity or by affinity.

  Under Muslim law, after "the Child Marriage Restraint Act", there is a restriction on the marriage of a Muslim male under 18 years of age and a Muslim female under 15 years of age. A guardian has the right to get a minor or a child with unsound mind married. The age of marriage, under Muslim law, is the age of puberty, i.e.,15 years. Marriage before the age of 7, even if contracted by a lawful guardian, is void.

- **"The Indian Christian Marriage Act (ICMA), 1872":** Under this Act, a marriage is legitimate if at least one of the parties is a Christian. Special conditions have been laid under this Act for solemnizing a Christian marriage. ICMA, 1872 lays down the requirement for issuing a 14 day preliminary notice before the date of marriage if the marriage is to be contracted and solemnized under this Act. There are designated persons who may solemnize the marriages and issue the marriage certificate. There is no fixed age for marriage in this Act.

- **Other personal laws on Marriages:** The Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act (PMDA) invalidates child marriage. However, the Act does not lay down the provisions for an invalid marriage.

  The Jewish personal law in India is uncodified. However, under personal law, age at marriage is identified with puberty, which is fixed at 12 years.

Notes

INTEXT QUESTIONS 15.1

1. What is meant by age at marriage as per the Hindu Marriage Act?

2. State the features of "Prohibition of Child Marriage Act 2006".

3. State the personal laws of marriage in Muslims and Christians.

15.2 LEGAL VALIDATION OF MARRIAGE THROUGH REGISTRATION?

We should know that the registration of marriage was made mandatory by the Supreme Court of India in 2006. A solemnized marriage can be registered under Section 7 of the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 (HMA) or the Special Marriage Act, 1954 (SMA).

The Special Marriage Act (SMA), 1954

The original Special Marriage Act was enacted in 1872

It was moved by an eminent jurist and Legislative Council member named Henry Maine,

It was enacted following a campaign launched in 1860 by Brahmo Samaj, especially Keshab Chandra Sen, for simpler marriage ceremonies.

Illustration 15.1 Origin of Special Marriage Act

SMA is applicable to all the citizens of India, irrespective of their religion. Registration under the HMA is limited to an already solemnised marriage. It excludes the registration of marriage solemnised by a Marriage Registrar. SMA, on the other hand, provides for the solemnisation of marriage and the registration by a Marriage Officer.

As per HMA, for the solemnization of marriage between two Hindus, we need to abide by the following conditions:

- Neither party has a spouse living at the time of the marriage,

- Neither party is incapable of giving valid consent to marriage in consequence of unsoundness of mind,

- Though capable of giving valid consent, neither of them has been suffering from any mental disorder or is unfit for marriage and procreation of children,

Notes

- Neither has been subject to recurrent attacks of insanity or epilepsy.
- The bride has completed the age of 18 years, and the bridegroom, the age of 21 years at the time of marriage,
- The parties are not within the degrees of prohibited relationship unless the custom or usage governing each of them permits a marriage between them,
- The parties are not a lineal ascendant of the other (Sapindas), unless the custom or usage governing each of them permits marriage between the two.

The HMA also defines the degree of prohibited relationship– Two individuals are said to be covered under the degrees of prohibited relationship if –

- One of them is the lineal ascendant of the other,
- One was the husband or wife of the lineal ascendant or descendant of the other,
- One of them was wife of the brother or the father's or mother's brother or the grandfather's or grandmother's brother of the other,
- They are brother and sister, aunt and nephew, uncle and niece, or children of brother and sister or two brothers or two sisters."[2]

Any marriage falling in the above categories will be considered void under this Act.

The Act provides certain exception to give due regard to the prevailing customs. If there is a custom governing the parties, they are eligible to marry even if they fall under the degrees of the prohibited relationship as per the Act.

HMA provides for punishment if marriages are solemnized within the degrees of prohibited relationship. Such marriages are considered null and void. "The parties of such a marriage are liable to be punished with a simple imprisonment for a period of one month or fine or Rs. 10000/- or with both."[3]

The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, under Section 7, lays down the ceremonies to be followed in a Hindu marriage. It states that a Hindu marriage can be solemnized in accordance with customary rites and ceremonies of either of the parties. It states, "Where the rites and ceremonies include the *Saptpadi* (taking seven steps by the bride and the groom jointly around the sacred fire), the marriage becomes complete and binding after the seventh step is taken. These ceremonies may vary according to the customs and traditions followed by the parties."[4]

Notes

15.3 THE SPECIAL MARRIAGE ACT, 1954

The Special Marriage Act (SMA) deals with both registrations as well as solemnisation of marriage. Section 4 of the Act provides for the conditions for marriage. These conditions are substantially similar to those laid down under Section 5 of HMA. According to this Act, no religious ceremonies are a prerequisite for a marriage to be complete. Section 4 of the Act lays down the following conditions for any marriage to be regarded as a legal marriage:

- "Neither of the party should have a spouse living at the time of marriage
- The physical and mental capacity of both parties must be as per the section.
- The age of the parties, i.e. the female has completed the age of eighteen, and the male has completed the age of twenty-one.
- The parties are not within the degree of prohibited relationship provided that custom governing one of the parties permit such a marriage between them."[5]

15.4 ADVANTAGES OF REGISTERING MARRIAGES UNDER THE SPECIAL MARRIAGE ACT

Let us try to understand the advantages of registering a marriage under SMA.

- The registration certificate is valuable evidence of marriage as it is a government document.
- This document becomes useful if any spouse wants to go out of the country.
- The document becomes useful if a person dies without a nomination for a bank deposit or life insurance policy to get this money in the name of the husband/wife.
- Registration helps in prevention of child marriages and, thereby, helps in preventing the trafficking of girls.
- Before registration, the Registrar has to verify if the marriage had actually taken place in accordance with the personal law applicable to the spouses. Before issuance of the marriage certificate, the Registrar will mention this in a special column in the presence of the spouses.
- As per the mandate of the Central Government, the states have to make birth registration compulsory. The states have been asked to make the registration of marriages compulsory. States have been given the power to legislate since they are in a better position to know the social structure and local conditions prevailing therein.

Notes

15.5 PERMANENT ALIMONY AND MAINTENANCE UNDER THE SPECIAL MARRIAGE ACT, 1954

Section 36 of the Special Marriage Act, 1954 **provides for the alimony pendent elite. It lays down that "**Where in any proceeding under Chapter V or Chapter VI of this Act, it is incorporated that the wife has no independent income sufficient for her support and the necessary expenses of the proceeding, it may, on the application of the wife, order the husband to pay to her the expenses of the proceeding, weekly or monthly during the proceeding such sum as having regard to the husband's income, it may seem to the Court to be reasonable."[6]

The provisions related to permanent alimony and maintenance are provided under Section 37 of the Special Marriage Act 1954**. It states that "**Any Court exercising jurisdiction under Chapter V or Chapter VI may, at the time of passing any decree or at any time subsequent to the decree, on an application made to it for the purpose, order that the husband shall secure to the wife for her maintenance and support, if necessary, by a charge on the husband's property, such gross sum or such monthly or periodical payment of money for a term not exceeding her life, as having regard to her own property, if any, her husband's property and ability, the conduct of the parties and other circumstances of the case it may seem to the Court to be just."

It also states that "if the District Court is satisfied that there is a change in the circumstances of either party at any time after it has made an order under subsection (1), it may at the instance of either party, vary, modify or rescind any such order in such manner as it may seem to the Court to be just."[7]

Further, it has been provided that "If the District Court is satisfied that the wife in whose favours an order has been made under this section has remarried or is not leading a chaste life, it may, at the instance of the husband vary, modify or rescind any such order and in such manner as the Court may deem just."[8]

Special Marriage Act 1954 also makes provision for the custody of children. Section 38 provides that **during** "any proceeding under Chapter V or Chapter VI, the District Court may, from time to time, pass such interim orders and make such provisions in the decree as it may seem to it to be just and proper for the custody, maintenance and education of minor children, consistently with their wishes wherever possible, and may, after the decree, upon application by petition for the purpose, make, revoke, suspend or vary, from time to time, all such orders and provisions concerning the custody, maintenance and education of such children as might have been made by such decree or interim orders in case the proceeding for obtaining such decree were still pending."[9]

Notes

INTEXT QUESTIONS 15.2

1. State the necessary conditions required under the Special Marriage Act 1954 for any marriage to be regarded as lawful.
2. Describe the advantage of registering marriages under The Special Marriage Act 1954.
3. Under the Special Marriage Act 1954, what is the legal procedure for obtaining permanent alimony and maintenance?

15.6 MAINTENANCE RIGHTS OF WOMEN UNDER INDIAN LAW

The provisions on maintenance for neglected persons have been dealt with under

Section 125 of Criminal Procedure Code, 1973. This Section also gives a wife the right to claim maintenance from her husband.

A woman can be called the legal "Wife" of a man only if their marriage has not been proved null and void as per the law applicable to them. A legally wedded wife is entitled to many rights, including the right to residence at the house of her husband and the right to have an equal share in the property of her husband.

The right to receive maintenance from her husband has been provided under Section 18 of the Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act, 1956. As per this Act, a Hindu wife has a right to claim maintenance if her husband is guilty of cruelty, desertion, polygamy or has a venereal disease, thereby enforcing her rights in divorce. Under Section 25 of this Act, the amount of maintenance fixed by the court or by agreement may be altered subsequently provided some material change in the circumstances that justify such alteration. This child is also entitled to receive maintenance. Husband and wife have to provide for the maintenance of their minor child. The husband must financially support her wife if she is incapable of earning.

15.7 THE HINDU MARRIAGE ACT - GROUNDS OF DIVORCE

Under HMA, originally, divorce was only based on the fault theory. Section 13 clause 1 provides nine faults as grounds for divorce which are available to both the husband and the wife to be claimed against the other while two fault grounds as mentioned in clause 2, which only the wife could claim to seek a divorce.

Clause 1A was added in Section 13 in 1964 by an amendment to recognize the breakdown of a marriage. Later, in 1976, another amendment introduced two additional fault grounds of divorce for the wife and a new Section 13B was added for divorce by mutual consent.

The various grounds on which a decree of divorce can be obtained are as follows-

Notes

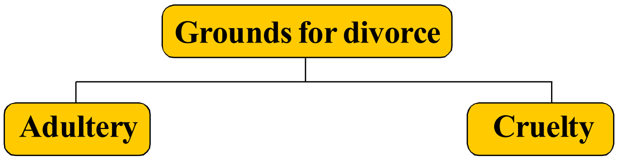


Figure 15.3 Grounds for divorce under Hindu Marriage Act

- **Adultery** Though adultery may not have been recognized as a criminal offence in all countries, according to HMA adultery, is a valid ground for divorce. In adultery, there must be voluntary or consensual sexual intercourse between a married person and another, whether married or unmarried, of the opposite sex, not being the other's spouse, during the subsistence of the marriage.

- **Cruelty:** The concept of cruelty is a changing concept. The modern concept of cruelty includes both mental and physical cruelty. Acts of cruelty are behavioural manifestations stimulated by different factors in the life of spouses and their surroundings. Therefore, each case has to be decided on the basis of its own set of facts.

- **Some Instances of Cruelty are as follows**: False accusations of adultery or unchastely, the demand of dowry, refusal to have marital intercourse, children, impotence, drunkenness, a threat to commit suicide, and the wife's writing false complaints to an employer of the husband.

The additional grounds provided to the wife under clause 2 of Section 13 are as follows:

- **Pre-Act Polygamous Marriage:** This clause states the ground for divorce as "That the husband has another wife, alive at the time of the solemnization of the marriage of the petitioner."

- **Rape, Sodomy or Bestiality:** Under this clause, a divorce petition can be presented if the husband has, since the solemnization of the marriage, been guilty of rape, sodomy or bestiality.

- **Non-Resumption of Cohabitation after a Decree/Order of Maintenance:** If a wife has obtained an order of maintenance in proceedings under Section 125 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 or a decree under Section 18, Hindu Adoption & Maintenance Act, 1956 and cohabitation has not been resumed between parties after one year or upwards, then this is a valid ground for suing for divorce.

- **Repudiation of Marriage:** This provision provides a ground for divorce to the wife when the marriage was solemnized before she attained the age of fifteen years, and she has repudiated the marriage but before the age of eighteen. Such repudiation may be expressed (written or spoken words) or may be implied from the conduct of the wife (left her husband & refused to come back). Moreover, this right (added by the 1976

Notes

amendment) has only a retrospective effect, i.e. it can be invoked irrespective of the fact that the marriage was solemnized before or after such amendment.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 15.3

1. What is meant by maintenance under the Hindu Marriage Act 1955?
2. What are the essential conditions for a valid Hindu Marriage under the HMA, 1955?
3. Discuss the various grounds of Divorce under the HMA 1955.
4. State the grounds on which a Hindu wife can claim maintenance and separate residence from her husband.

15.8. SOME IMPORTANT FAMILY LAWS

15.8.1 The Dowry Prohibition Act 1961

This legislation prohibits the request, payment or acceptance of a dowry "as consideration for the marriage". "Dowry" under this law is defined as "any property or valuable security given or agreed to be given directly or indirectly by one party to a marriage to the other party in marriage or by the parent of either party to a marriage or by any other person, to either party to the marriage or any other person." It can be given at, before or any time after the marriage. However, it should be connected with the parties to the marriage. The Act excludes dower or mahr if Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) is applicable to the parties.

Section 3 of this Act punishes asking or giving dowry with imprisonment which shall not be less than five years. Additionally, it provides a fine which shall not be less than Rs. 15000 or the amount of the value of such dowry (whichever is more).

15.8.2 Dowry and Indian Penal Code

The Dowry Prohibition Act (DPA), 1961, is applied to all people irrespective of religion. Under this law, punishment has been prescribed for giving, taking or abetting the giving or taking of dowry.

The Indian Penal Code 1860, under Section 304B, provides punishment if the death of a woman is caused "by burns or bodily injury or occurs otherwise than under normal circumstances, within seven years of marriage, and if shown that soon before her death, she was subjected to cruelty or harassment by her husband or any relative of her husband for or in connection with any demand of dowry". Death falling in this category is called "dowry death", and it shall be deemed that such husband or relative has caused her death. Section 113B was inserted in the Indian Evidence Act 1872 for the presumption of dowry death.

Notes

15.8.3 The Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1976

This act is an amendment to the Child Marriage Act of 1929. It is so socially embedded in the traditional, cultural and religious roots of Indian communities that even after considerable sensitization by NGOs and government agencies along with multiple laws, it is a hard battle to fight.

Child marriage, as per the Act is a contract of marriage between the parties where either the male party has not completed twenty-one years of age, or the female party has not completed eighteen years of age. The party who was a child at the time of marriage can repudiate the marriage, whether solemnized before or after this Act commenced, provided it is declared void before his/her second year of maturity.

If the husband is praying for nullifying the marriage, then the court may pass the decree that the husband or his family shall be responsible to maintain the girl till the time she is remarried. If there are any children born out of that marriage, then the court shall decide the residence of the child, as to with whom the child shall reside and how visits of the other parent shall be organized. The court shall be driven by the best interest of the child. Furthermore, a child conceived before the marriage, declared void, shall be considered a legitimate child.

15.8.4 The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006

The Child Marriage Restraint Act 1929 could not produce the results as envisaged. Therefore, a new law was passed, the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act 2006. The Act prevents child marriages by laying down enhanced punishment of rigorous imprisonment for two years and/ or a fine of Rs. 1 lakh.

Under the Act, a child is defined as a male below 21 years of age and a female below 18 years of age. It defines “minor” as a person who has not attained the age of majority as per the Indian Majority Act 1875. The Act also includes provisions for the maintenance of a girl child. It imposes liability upon the husband to pay maintenance if he is a major. In case her is a minor, his parents have the liability to provide maintenance.

The Act makes child marriage voidable at the option of the parties. However, the child marriage shall be void if the consent to marriage was obtained by fraud or deceit or if the child was enticed away from his lawful guardians and the sole purpose of marriage was to use the child for trafficking or other immoral purposes. Under this Act, Child Marriage Prohibition Officers are appointed and it is their duty to prevent child marriages, and sensitize people about it.

15.8.5 The Protection of Women from the Domestic Violence Act, 2005

The Domestic Violence Act (the DV Act), 2005 defines domestic violence as “any act, omission or commission or conduct of the respondent, which includes the threat or actual abuse”. The purpose behind the enactment of this Act was to provide an effective remedy to women

Notes

pertaining to domestic violence and secure their rights under the Constitution. It includes five types of domestic violence, *viz.*, physical, verbal, emotional, economic and sexual. Emotional violence includes the presence of other victims of violence in the family and marriage without consent. Economic violence includes violence related to *Stridhan*, dowry and property. Sexual violence includes sexual abuse of one partner by the other and marital rape.

15.8.6 Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act, 1994

Violence against female children occurs right before they are born. Female feticide is the most common mechanism to eliminate a girl child, even before birth.

Pre-natal diagnosis refers to determining the sex of the child in the mother's womb. 'Fetus' means an unborn human from after the third month of pregnancy until birth. If the fetus is found to be female, then the same is aborted. Hence, 'feticide' means the destruction of a fetus at any time prior to birth. Infanticide is practised after a girl child is born. The girl child is killed after birth. This is regarded as murder in law.

The PCPNDT Act makes it illegal to determine the sex of the unborn baby. This Act was enacted on 20 September 1994 with the intent to prohibit the prenatal diagnostic technique for determination of the sex of the fetus, which leads to female feticide. It aimed to put a check on female feticide. Under this Act, the radiologist/sinologist/gynaecologist is not allowed to divulge the sex of the fetus. Anybody working contrary to the spirit of this act is liable to face the strict action of implementing authorities and punishments as decided by the court.

WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

- Women are subjected to multiple layers of violence and abuse. Over the last few decades, the status of women in India has been subjected to many changes. In ancient times, women enjoyed equal status as that of men. The scenario changed during the medieval period. Soon after, it led to the movement for equal rights of women by various reformers.
- In the 21st-century India, women are participating in every sphere of life. Their involvement in education, sports, politics, media, art and culture and service sectors, science and technology, *etc.*, has been increasing ever since. Society transforms over time, and appropriate laws need to be devised to address the emerging challenges.
- The Constitution of India envisions a just society that provides equality to women in all matters and their civil, political and economic rights. For instance, women have the same political rights through adult franchises.
- Sexual harassment of women at workplace has been a subject of concern. In 2013, the sexual harassment of women at workplace (precaution, prohibition and redressed) Act

was passed to provide a safe working environment for women.

TERMINAL EXERCISE

1. What is the advantage of adhering to the legal age of marriage? Explain.
2. What is the legal framework for registering marriages in India?
3. What is the legal validation of marriage through registration?
4. Highlight the need for compulsory registration of marriage to tackle child marriage.
5. Explain the concept of "domestic violence"?
6. Explain "custody disputes"?
7. What is the role of the Dowry Prohibition officer at a distinct level?
8. Name any four important family laws related to marriage and dowry.

Notes

ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

15.1

1. It is 21 years or more for men and 18 years or more for women.

2. (i) The age at marriage under this Act for girls is 18 years and more, and for a man, 21 years and above.

   (ii) A girl can obtain the decree of nullity if she entered into a child marriage within 2 years of attaining the age of 18 years.

1. (i) The Hindu Marriage Act 1955

   (ii) Muslim personal law

   (iii) The Indian Christian Marriage Act 1872

15.2

1. (i) Age of marriage is 21 or more for men and 18 or more for women.

   (ii) No party should have a spouse living at the time of marriage.

   (iii) The parties should not be within the degree of prohibited relationship as provided under the Act except when the customs governing one of the parties

Notes

permit such a marriage between them.

(iv) Act does not provide for any religious ceremonies as a prerequisite before a marriage is completed.

2. Advantages for Registration of Marriages

- Provides a government certificate which is a valuable evidence of marriage
- It is useful for going abroad- visa purposes
- It can be used for nomination in bank, insurance and property matters.
- Prevents child marriages.

3. "Any court, on an application made to it for alimony and maintenance, can order that the husband shall secure to the wife for her maintenance and support, if necessary, by a charge on the husband's property, such gross sum or such monthly or periodical payment of money for a term not exceeding life."

15.3

1. Under this Act, a Hindu wife is "entitled to claim maintenance from her husband if he is guilty of cruelty, desertion, polygamy or has a venereal disease, thereby enforcing her rights in divorce".

2. (i) No party should have a spouse living at the time of marriage.

   (ii) The age of the parties – the female must have completed 18 years and the male the age of 21.

   (iii) The parties should not be within the degree of prohibited relationship as provided under the Act except when the customs governing one of the parties permit such a marriage between them.

3. Cruelty, desertion, polygamy or any venereal disease, adultery,or Repudiation of marriage.

4. A Hindu wife is entitled to claim maintenance for her husband under Section 18 of the Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act if the husband is guilty of cruelty, desertion, polygamy or has a venereal disease.

16

LAWS FOR WOMEN'S SAFETY AND SECURITY

We all see violence against women occurring in public and private spaces. In the previous lesson, we learnt various laws related to marriage, divorce and dowry. It is common and visible in all settings, urban or rural areas, streets, public transport, parks, schools, workplaces and homes. Women experience sexual violence, harassment, assault, rape and discrimination at work. The National Crime Records Bureau report states that cruelty by a husband or his relative against women constitutes the majority of crimes reported under the Indian Penal Code (31.9), followed by assault to outrage their modesty (27.6%), kidnapping and abduction (22.5%) and rape 10.3% (2018). Throughout their life, women face discrimination and are regarded as inferior to men both physically and socially. Patriarchal system and stereotype that men are the breadwinners and women are the family-bearers, along with the belief that compromise and suffering in silence are her virtues, make them suffer domination at the hands of men and society. The lesson presents an overview of thedifferent constitutional provisions. The Constitution of India under Articles 14, 15(2) and (3) and 16 directs the State to ensure equality between men and women. It also inplains how despite constitutional provisions, legal rights and development-related schemes, women remain marginalised and vulnerable. All these challenges threaten the safety and security of women and make gender equality and women empowerment a distant dream. In this lesson, the learner will get an exposure to learn various laws which will safeguard the dignity and safety of women and children.

OUTCOMES

After studying this lesson, learner:

- recognizes the need to change property laws according to the changing social world.
- explains the role of the Sexual Harassment of the women at Workplace Act (2013), Anti-Rape law, Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act (1986) and the

Notes

cyber law in ensuring women's and children's safety and dignity.

- explains the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Amendment Bill (2006) that safeguard and rehabilitate vulnerable women and children.
- identifies and report infringement of any of these laws to an adult they trust and the relevant formal authority
- critically examines relevant laws and identify their potential in safeguarding the dignity and safety of women and children

16.1. NEED TO RECOGNISE PROPERTY RIGHTS OF WOMEN

Women's property rights include inheritance rights, land rights and other forms of property rights given to them by society at any given time. They are dependent on socio-cultural, racial, political, and legal factors. For a long time, women have faced discrimination and denial of property ownership and share. In modern times, the issue of property rights for women remains largely unaddressed. As a result, land titles are gender-biased and skewed in the favour of male members

Figure 16.1 Property Rights = Basic Rights of Women

The personal laws based on religious writing specific to each community are discriminatory towards women.

- **Hindu Women-**Under the ancient Hindu laws, the woman had no property rights but only a right to maintenance. Unlike their male counterpart, a daughter had no birthright in the joint family estate as she was regarded as a temporary member of the paternal

Notes

family. The only property she could hold as an absolute owner was her "*Streedhan*", an amount given to her for her economic security at the time of her marriage and equated with her inheritance right in the joint family property. Even under the codified Hindu laws i.e., the Hindu Succession Act (1956), daughters were denied a claim in the ancestral property, and only the sons had a right to this property. To address this gap, a change in the Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act of 2005 was passed, which gave equal property rights to daughters at par with sons, thereby ending the centuries-old discriminatory laws. The act is a praiseworthy step to check bias against women. However, the actual effect of this amendment needs to be analyzed.

- **Muslim Women-**The Muslim Personal Laws maintain the superiority of men. Though the Muslim female gets an absolute right of ownership over the share of property inherited by her, inequality still exists. In the case of inheritance, a Muslim male gets double the share to that of the daughter. Her share diminishes with the presence of the male claimant.

- **Christian Women-** Indian Succession Act, 1925 deals with the inheritance rights of Christian women. A Christian daughter has no preexisting right to family property. It arises only after the intestate death of her parents, and she is entitled to 1/4th of the son's share or Rs 5,000, whichever is less. This criterion limits her inheritance right. She cannot desire the division of properties. In the case of a Christian wife, she gets 1/3rd of the property of her deceased husband when a lineal descendant exists; else, she gets a 1/2nd share in the property.

- **Parsi Women:** In the case of inheritance rights of Parsi women, if a man dies, his widow and son get double the sum granted to a daughter. In case of the death of her child, if her husband (father) is alive, a Parsi woman does not inherit her children's property. However, after the Amendment Act of 1991 to Parsi intestate Succesion Act 1865 if a Parsi male dies intestate, his widow and children will get an equal share of the property. Likewise, the daughters are entitled to an equal share with the sons.

A comparative analysis of all the major personal laws in India proves that discriminatory practices against women are continuing. Through various amendments in legislation and initiative, this has been checked. Concessional home loan rates and lower stamp duty charges for women are some of the initiatives taken to promote women's share in the inheritance of property. However, a lot remains to be done that includes the mindset of people to treat women with dignity and equality.

Notes

16.1.1. NON-RECOGNITION OF MARITAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

The marital property includes every property acquired before and after marriage, including the assets whose value has increased during marriage. Globally, many countries recognize marital property, like the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and Singapore. However, none of the Indian laws contains a provision that provides an equal share to the wife in her husband's property. The effort of women towards the family economy is not valued. Society and law do not regard domestic work as productive and marriage as an economic partnership. Section 27 of the Hindu Marriage Act (1955) enables the Courts to make provisions about property jointly presented to the parties at or about the time of marriage. Only the Portuguese Civil Code (1867) gives marital property rights to a wife. Under this law, when the marriage dissolves by death or divorce, the entire property is divided into two halves to be divided among both spouses. Thus, even if the wife is not employed, her efforts towards family maintenance will entitle her right to property earned by her husband during the subsistence of the marriage.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 16.1

Choose the correct option for the following questions: -

1. Hindu Succession Amendment Act (2005) came into effect on

   a) 9th July 2005

   b) 9th August 2005

   c) 9th September 2005

   d) 9th October 2005

2. Under Muslim Law, a son gets ....of what is given to a daughter.

   a) Equal

   b) Double

   c) Four times

   d) None of these

3. Which section under the Hindu Law enables the Courts to make provisions about property jointly presented to the parties at or about the time of marriage.

   a. Section 24 of Hindu Marriage Act (1955)

   b. Section 25 of Hindu Marriage Act (1955)

Notes

c. Section 26 of Hindu Marriage Act (1955)

d. Section 27 of Hindu Marriage Act (1955)

4. What are the changes introduced by Amendment Act of 1991 to Parsi Intestate Succession Act, 1865

   a. If a Parsi male dies intestate, his widow and children will get an equal share of the property.

   b. The daughters are entitled to an equal share with the sons.

   c. The daughter was entitled to half of the son's share

   d. Both A and B

5. What do you mean by Women's property rights?

6. Explain the concept of Streedhan

16.2. ROLE OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF WOMEN AT WORKPLACE ACT (2013)

With access to education, women are seeking employment. However, at the workplace, they face harassment from male co-workers. Sexual harassment violates the women's right to equality and dignity of work granted under Articles 14 and 15 of the Indian Constitution. Moreover, it violates Article 19(1) (g) right to practice any profession and Article 21 right to life and to live with dignity. Before the Supreme Court laid guidelines in the case of *Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan* (1997), a woman experiencing harassment at the workplace could make a complaint under the various sections of the Indian Penal Code (1860). The guidelines led to the passing of this beneficial Act titled the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act (2013). It protects women against sexual harassment in public or private workplaces and imposes a duty on the employer and other responsible persons to prevent this offence. In addition, the Act provides the complaint redressal mechanism for the women employees to contact with the complaint. Some of the definitions under the Act are:

- **Sexual Harassment-** means physical contact and advances involving unwelcome and explicit sexual overtures; or a demand or request for sexual favours; or making sexually coloured remarks, or forcibly showing pornography; or any other unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of sexual nature.

- Aggrieved woman covers all women, irrespective of their age or employment status, whether in the organized or unorganized sectors, public or private and covers clients, customers, and domestic workers as well.

Notes

- **Workplace-** It includes organizations, departments, offices, branch units in the public and private sector, organized and unorganized, hospitals, nursing homes, educational institutions, sports institutes, stadiums, sports complexes and any place an employee visits during employment, including transportation.

- **Employee-** It covers regular/temporary/ad-hoc/daily wage employees, working for remuneration or not and can also include volunteers.

- **Employer-** It includes the head of the Government department/organization/institution/ office/branch/unit, the person responsible for management/supervision/control of the workplace, the person discharging contractual obligations for his/her employees and to a domestic worker the person who benefits from that employment.

To combat Sexual harassment at the workplace, the Act states that every office with more than ten employees must constitute an Internal Complaints Committee. The committee should have one woman presiding officer employed at the senior level and four other members. Within three months of the incident, the aggrieved women can make a written complaint to the committee. The inquiry must be completed within 90 days. If the organisation fails to observe these legal provisions, it will face penalties, including the cancellation of license or registration. If the allegation of sexual harassment is proven, the accused will be terminated from his services, and his promotion and increments will be denied. The complainant women victims will be reasonably compensated.

Figure 16.2 Safe Workplace is Women's Right

The Act makes it mandatory for employers to provide a safe working environment to women workers. For this, he must conspicuously display the penal consequences of sexual harassment and the order constituting the Internal Complaints Committee. Thus, the Act realizes the goal of gender equality, economic empowerment, security at the workplace and life and liberty for women to improve their workforce participation. The increasing complaints of sexual harassment are evidence of awareness among women about the employer's obligation and

Notes

their rights as an employee. It is helping women to come out and raise their voices towards safeguarding their well-being at the workplace.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 16.2

1. Define the term Sexual Harassment.
2. Explain the objectives of the Sexual harassment of women at workplace Act, 2013.
3. How much time has been given to complete an inquiry of complaint received under the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013?
4. What are the responsibilities of the Employer under the Act under the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013

16.3. ANTI- RAPE LAW

Rape is a heinous offence recognised under the Indian Penal Code (1860). It is a crime that is an attack on the body and soul of the women victim. After the case of *Tukaram v. State of Maharashtra* (1979) or the Mathura Rape case, to curb this offence and protect the interests of the women victim, the Criminal Law Amendment Act (1983) was passed. The amendment introduced the following changes:

- Consent of a woman given under intoxication or an insane person shall not be free consent.
- Trial to be in camera and prohibition on the publication of the trial proceedings.
- Prohibition on the disclosure of the identity of a rape victim.
- Character assassination of prosecution was prohibited.
- The accused will be under the "Burden of Proof" to establish his innocence. He will have to establish that the sexual intercourse was with the consent of the woman complainant else he will be liable for the offence of rape.
- Custodial Rape is severally punishable. It is a rape committed by the police officer, public servants or officers of jail with a woman in custody and rape committed in a remand home, women's hospital, or children's hospital, by the management/staff of that place

After the above amendments, several judgments pronounced by the Supreme Court made important observations towards the dignity and safety of women in India. In the landmark

Notes

case of *State of Maharashtra v. Madhukar N. Mardikar,* (1991), the court held that the unchastity of a woman does not mean she can be violated. She is privileged to protect her person against such attempts, entitled to legal protection, and her testimony cannot be disregarded. Changes were introduced in the Indian Evidence Act that protects the rape victim against unnecessary questioning about her past character. Again, in the case of *Delhi Domestic Working Women's Forum v. Union of India* (1995), the Supreme Court of India laid important guidelines for rape trials. It stated that before being interrogated, the police must inform the rape victim about her right to counsel. The court directed to keep the identity of the rape victim secret during these trials. For legal assistance to the victim, the police station should maintain a list of lawyers.

The Nirbhaya Rape Case or Delhi Gang Rape Case (16 December 2012) resulted in the passing of the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act of 2013 or the Anti-Rape Bill. The Act defines a broad range of sexual crimes like sexual voyeurism and stalking and penalises the police officers responsible for the non-registration of the FIR (first information report), making reporting the incident by a rape victim easier. Concerning children, the Protection of Children against Sexual Offences Act (2012) safeguards them against sexual assault, sexual harassment and pornography. Considering the tender age of the child victim, the law treats him with care and sensitivity. The government is working to effectively deal with rape crime by arranging the necessary infrastructure.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 16.3

Choose the correct option: -

1. Who can be of the following is punished for the custodial rape of a woman?

   a) Police Officer

   b) Public servants

   c) Management of hospital

   d) All of the above

2. "The unchastity of a woman does not make her open to any and every person to violate her person as and when he wishes." The statement was made in the case of ....?

   a) Tukaram v. State of Maharashtra, (1979)

   b) State of Maharashtra Vs. Madhukar N. Mardikar (1991)

   c) Delhi Domestic Working Women's Forum. Union of India, (1995)

Notes

d) None of the above

3. Which case led to the passing of the Criminal Law Amendment Act (1983)to curb this offence and protect the interests of the women victim, the.

   a) Tukaram v. State of Maharashtra, (1979)

   b) State of Maharashtra Vs. Madhukar N. Mardikar (1991)

   c) Delhi Domestic Working Women's Forum. Union of India, (1995)

   d) None of the above

4. What changes were made by the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act of 2013 or the Anti-Rape Bill?

   a) Defines a broad range of sexual crimes like sexual voyeurism and stalking

   b) Penalises the police officers responsible for the non-registration of the FIR

   c) Make easier reporting of the incident by a rape victim.

   d) All the Above

16.4. THE INDECENT REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN (PROHIBITION) ACT (1986)

Media is an important medium to spread information in society and influence public opinion. It can promote and preserve gender justice and women's dignity and equality through write-ups and advertisements. Nevertheless, the indecent portrayal of women in media is common, making women victims of cheap advertising. There is a lack of sensitivity about gender issues, and indecent representation of women is a gross violation of several fundamental rights (Article 21) and state duties (Article 51 A) mandated under the Constitution of India.

Initially, the Indian Penal Code (1860) declared the dissemination of obscene articles, including books, pamphlets, paper, writing, drawing, painting, representation, figures, etc., punishable under the law. These materials were considered obscene if they tended to corrupt persons who would like to read, see or hear their content. Over a period, many other enacted laws curb and prohibit the derogatory depiction of women in the media. Some of these legislations are the Press and Registration of Book Act (1867), the Young Persons Harmful Publications Act (1956), the Press Council of India Act (1978), the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act (1995) and the Information Technology Act (2000).

The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act (1986) prohibits the derogatory portrayal of women in media through advertisement, publication, writing, painting, figures, etc. The act prevents and restrains this offence making it punishable with imprisonment and a fine. The Government is taking the indecent portrayal of women in mass media seriously and

laying strict guidelines. The media broadcasting guidelines and laws are regularly reviewed. A can complain to the police about the derogatory representation of women in any media.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 16.4

Notes

Choose the correct option:-

1. Indecent representation is also a gross violation of Article ________ of fundamental Right of constitution of India

   a. 14

   b. 18

   c. 21

   d. 33

2. The Young Persons Harmful Publications Act was passed in

   a. 1953

   b 1956

   c. 1978

   d. 1995

3. The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act (1986) prohibits the indecent depiction of women through …

   a. advertisements,

   b. publications,

   c. paintings,

   d. All of the above

4. T he materials are considered obscene if they tend to corrupt persons who would like to …………….their content.

   a. Read

   b. See

   c. Hear

   d. All the above

16.5 CYBER LAWS ENSURING THE SAFETY AND DIGNITY OF WOMEN

With the introduction and spread of technology, cyber-crimes against women have increased. The offenders commit these crimes on the World Wide Web. Some of the cyber-crimes against women are as follows: –

- Harassment through e-mails and blackmailing, threatening and bullying women from a fake ID.
- Cyber stalking - Following a person's movements across the Internet and posting unwarranted messages.
- Cyber Bullying is willful and repeated harm by sending intimidating or threatening messages through computers, cell phones or other electronic devices.
- Cyber pornography means publishing and printing pornographic material.
- Cyber defamation means publishing defamatory matters about someone or his connections.
- Morphing is an act of an unauthorized user who creates fake profiles, edits the original picture and then re-posts it.
- Email spoofing means "misrepresenting its origin" or showing its origin different from where it originated.

Figure 16.3 No online harassment for women

Notes

In India, the Information Technology Act (2000) and the amendment of 2008 fight cyber-crimes. However, cyber-crimes are rising due to poor awareness and lower reporting by women victims. Since digital technology is growing, more than mere enactment of laws will be required. To curb cyber-crimes, the government and the responsible authorities must be more proactive in their enforcement.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 16.5

1. Explain the different types of cyber-crimes?
2. Name one act enforced to check cyber-crimes.
3. What are the reasons behind the increase in cyber-crimes ?

16.5. THE IMMORAL TRAFFIC (PREVENTION) AMENDMENT BILL (2006)

Trafficking in human beings is a heinous crime, violative of human rights and dignity of women and children who are more prone to trafficking as societal norms and marginalize their value and status in society. A variety of reasons force women and children into this trap. These are including poverty, illiteracy, harmful cultural practices, unemployment, certain traditional practices (like the Devadasi system), natural calamities and poor rehabilitation of disaster victims. Trafficking in women and children can be for prostitution, forced labour, domestic work, employment in the entertainment industry, organ trading, begging, fraudulent or forced marriages, and the purchase and sale of babies for adoption. Unfortunately, the secretive nature of this crime prevents it from coming to light and reporting.

In the case of *Gaurav Jain v. Union of India and others* (1990), the Supreme Court observed that women involved in the flesh trade are victims of adverse socio-economic circumstances. The commercial exploitation of sex workers is a crime, and those trapped in custom-oriented prostitution, and gender-oriented prostitution are victims. The Supreme Court proposed a three-step process of counselling, cajoling and coercion to enforce the laws. It gave detailed directions for the rescue and rehabilitation of women involved in prostitution and their children.

The laws which mainly govern the problem of trafficking in India include the Constitution of India(1950), the Indian Penal Code (1860), the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) Act (2005) and the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act (1986) abolishes trafficking in women and girls for prostitution. The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Amendment Bill 2006 amends the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act to better combat trafficking and sexual exploitation for commercial purposes. The Amendment bill 2006:

- Repeals the provision for prosecuting prostitutes for soliciting clients.

- Prosecutes a person who visits a brothel and sexually exploits a trafficked victim.
- Defines the term "trafficking in persons" and provides penalties and increases penalties for some offenses.
- Combats trafficking; it constitutes authorities at the central and state level.
- "In-camera" trials away from public view.
- Penalizes prostitution in a public place.
- Appoints special police officers to enforce the Act.
- Provides for the rescue and rehabilitation of sex workers.

Notes

INTEXT QUESTIONS 16.6

1. As per the Supreme Court decision in the case of Gaurav Jain v. Union of India and others (1990), what steps are necessary for checking /curbing trafficking?

   a. Counselling

   b. Cajoling

   c. Coercion

   d. All of the above

2. What are the reasons that forces women and children into trafficking:

   a) Poverty

   b) Unemployment

   c) Natural calamities and poor rehabilitation of disaster victims

   d) All of the above

3. Explain the major provisions of the Immoral Trafficking (Prevention) Act (1986)?

16.6. REPORTING THE CRIMES BY WOMEN VICTIM

The analysis of the above laws indicates that women face discrimination and denial due to socio-cultural and religious reasons. The Indian Constitution guarantees fundamental rights and social laws to mitigate discrimination faced by women. A host of laws provides redressal mechanisms for every infringement of rights protecting women and children. Some of the redressal mechanisms and formal authorities working towards safeguarding women's dignity and safety are as under:

Notes

- **The Legal Aid Services Authorities Act, 1987**

  The act provides free legal aid to a person belonging to a Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe, a person who is a victim of trafficking in human beings, a disabled, a woman or child, a workman, a person in custody, a person unable to engage a lawyer and secure legal services on account of reasons such as poverty and indigence.

- **National Policies and Plans**

  1. National Policy for the Empowerment of Women, 2001
  2. National Plan of Action for children, 2004
  3. National Plan of Action to combat trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of women and children, 1998
  4. UJJAWALA ("Comprehensive Scheme for Prevention of Trafficking for Rescue, Rehabilitation and Re-Integration of Victims of Trafficking for Commercial Sexual Exploitation)

- **Commissions**

  1. National Commission for Human Rights.
  2. National Commission for Women.
  3. Nation Commission for Protection of Child Rights.

- **The concerned Ministries**

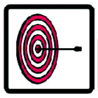
  1. Role of the Ministry of Women and Child Development
  2. Role of the National Human Rights Commission
  3. Role of the Ministry of Home Affairs
  4. Role of the National Commission for Women

Despite the present mechanism, not all the offences are reported because people think doing so will bring a bad name to the victim and her family. In order to curb these crimes, the victim should be encouraged to approach the police station and contact a social activist or an NGO. An FIR should be lodged in case of rape without a delay. To check the indecent representation of women, the media broadcasting guidelines and laws should be regularly reviewed for formulating advertising standards. The complaints may be made by any person to the police.

In the case of cyber-crimes, women are reluctant to report the offence, and the offenders roam freely even after the commission of cyber-crime. Women victims should report these crimes so the abuser will refrain from repeating such actions. For this, the government, media,

Notes

NGOs and families of the victim can play an important role. A multi-dimensional approach is essential, including legislative measures, enforcement, programmes and schemes, training and capacity building and creating awareness about the legislation to deal with these crimes. Sensitive handling by police, judges, and media of reported cases remains supreme. Thus proper implementation of these crucial laws and awareness of women about their rights and legal remedies can eliminate crimes against women.



WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

- Women’s property rights in India remain ignored and unaddressed. A comparative analysis of all the major personal laws in India highlights discrimination against women. Through several progressive laws, the government is promoting property holding among women.

- Sexual harassment is violative of women’s right to equality and dignity. The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act (2013) protects women against sexual harassment in public or private workplaces. The act makes it mandatory to constitute an Internal Complaints Committee in all offices with ten or more employees.

- Rape is the most heinous crime covered under the Indian Penal Code (1860). Generally, the offence of sexual abuse is unreported because of the perception that this will bring a bad name to the victim and her family. The tendency to blame the victim makes her less courageous to seek support from her family members and initiate legal action against the accused. Courts have laid down guidelines for the sensitive handling of these cases.

- The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act (1986) prohibits the derogatory depiction of women in the media through advertisements, publications, writings, paintings, figures, or any other manner. It prohibits the selling, distribution, or circulation of any books, pamphlets, etc., that represents or portrays women indecently. The act provided punishment of imprisonment and a fine for the offence.

- Cybercrimes include cyber stalking, cyber bullying, harassment via e-mails, etc. These offences are committed against women and need stringent implementation procedures. To curb these crimes, awareness about them and their reporting are crucial.

- The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act (1986) abolishes traffic in women and girls for prostitution. The Act declares punishable their trafficking and sexual exploitation for commercial purposes.

- Various mechanisms safeguard and protects the dignity and safety of women and children.

These include legislative measures, enforcement, programmes and schemes, training and capacity building and creating awareness about the legislation.

TERMINAL EXERCISE

1. What are the changes introduced by the Amendment of 2005 to the Hindu Succession Act?
2. Explain the share given to Muslim women under the Muslim Inheritance laws
3. Describe the inheritance rights of women under various personal laws.
4. What is meant by sexual harassment at the workplace?
5. What are the duties of the employer?
6. What is Internal Complaint Committee?
7. Critically examine the Anti-rape laws in India.
8. Discuss the recent amendments to rape laws.
9. State the salient features of the Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act 1986.
10. Describe the various types of cyber-crimes against women and children.
11. What are the major provisions of the Immoral Trafficking (Prevention) Act (1986)?
12. Describe the salient feature of the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Amendment Bill (2006).
13. Describe the various laws for preventing crimes against women in India.

GLOSSARY

Amendment- An alteration proposed or put into effect by the parliamentary or constitutional procedure.

- **Fundamental Rights-** These are the basic rights provided under the Indian Constitution including equality before the law, freedom of speech and expression, religious and cultural freedom and peaceful assembly, freedom to practice religion, and the right to constitutional remedies.
- **Inheritance-** Acquiring possession from past generations.
- **Legislation-** It is the power of an official organ of a state or other organisation to make rules and laws that have the force of authority.

- **Lineal descendants-**They are blood relatives of a person in the direct line of descent like the children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, etc.
- **Preamble-** It is an introduction to the constitution or a statute that mentions the reasons and legal intention for enacting them.
- **Redressal-** The complaints received from a person and actions taken on the issue raised, grant of compensation for injuries sustained and damages or restitution for harm/ injury/damages.
- **Trafficking-** It is the trade of humans for forced labour, sexual slavery, or commercial sexual exploitation.
- Streedhan-It is the property of a Hindu bride, conferred as a token of love by her natal family.

Notes

ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

16.1

1. c. 9th September 2005
2. b. Double
3. d. Section 27 of Hindu Marriage Act (1955)
4. d. both A and B
5. Women's property rights include inheritance rights, land rights and other forms of property rights given to them by society at any given time.
6. "Streedhan", an amount given to her for her economic security at the time of her marriage and equated with her inheritance right in the joint family property

16.2

1. It aims to protect women against sexual harassment in public or private workplaces and imposes a duty on the employer and other responsible persons to prevent this offence. In addition, the Act provides the complaint redressal mechanism for the women employees to contact with the complaint
2. Sexual Harassment means physical contact and advances involving unwelcome and explicit sexual overtures; or a demand or request for sexual favours; or making sexually coloured remarks, or forcibly showing pornography; or any other unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of sexual nature.

Notes

3. Within three months of the incident, the aggrieved women can make a written complaint to the committee. The inquiry must be completed within 90 days.

4. The Act makes it mandatory for employers to provide a safe working environment to women workers. Every office with more than ten employees must constitute an Internal Complaints Committee. He must conspicuously display the penal consequences of sexual harassment and the order constituting the Internal Complaints Committee. If the organisation fails to observe these legal provisions, it will face penalties, including the cancellation of license or registration.

16.3

1. b. All of the above
2. b. State of Maharashtra Vs. Madhukar N. Mardikar (1991).
3. a. Tukaram v. State of Maharashtra, (1979)
4. d. all of the above

16.4

1. c. 21
2. b. 1956
3. d
4. d

16.5

1. Harassment through emails, cyber stalking, cyberbullying, cyber pornography, morphing, spoofing etc.
2. Information Technology Act (2000) and amendment of 2008.
3. The cyber-crimes are rising due to poor awareness and lower reporting by women victims.

16. 6

1. d. all of the above
2. d. all of the above
3. The major provisions of the Immoral Trafficking (Prevention) Act (1986) are

   I. Stop the trafficking of women and girls for prostitution.

   II. Declares trafficking as a punishable offence.

17

GENDER AND LABOUR LAWS

In the previus lesson, you have learnt various laws that safeguard the safety and security of women and children. From newspaper and other media sources, you might have read about how physiological differences between the two sexes, division of labour and gender hierarchies have been created in society. In India, it is believed that during the Vedic period, men and women enjoyed equal status. However, later, gender imbalance and discrimination entered society. Social practices like Sati, child marriage, the Devadasi system, buying and selling of vulnerable groups, bigamy, divorce, and Halala reflect gender discrimination. Even after legally making these practices defunct through legal reforms, the essence of the dysfunctional gender equity still rampantly prevails in society and is manifested through domestic violence, human trafficking, dowry deaths, female feticide, female infanticide, sexual objectification, violence and sexual harassment of women at workplace.

At the workplace, sexual harassment discriminates and de-motivates women and young girls from having an active work life. In order to ameliorate discriminatory conditions at the workplace, laws on industry and working conditions were passed. These enactments contain special provisions for women to eliminate injustice and discrimination at workplace. Some of these legislations are the Workmen Compensation Act, 1923; the Payment of Wages Act, 1936; the Factories Act, 1948; the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961; the Minimum Wages Act, 1948; the Employees State Insurance Act, 1948 and the Pensions Act, 1987. Gender injustice is not a new problem, nor restricted to the Indian landscape. It requires not just legal reforms but also attitudinal changes. Until that is brought, women will continue facing discrimination in society.

This lesson presents a comprehensive view of the provision made to protect women's interest while working.

OUTCOMES

After completing this lesson, learner:

- states the meaning of Gender and Labour Laws in India:
- appreciates the importance and need for Gender and Labour Laws.
- recognizes the importance of Gender and Labour Laws at International level:
- identifies the Gender and Labour Laws in India:
- appreciates the role of the judiciary in ensuring Gender and Labour justice In India.

17.1 GENDER AND LABOUR LAWS IN INDIA

To protect women's right to work, various legislations have been framed and implemented to encourage women to engage in economically gainful work.

17.1.1 What is Gender Justice?

Gender equality and protection of women's interests through labour laws are key ingredients of social justice.

India's economic progress and development is marred by a consistent rise in gender inequality. This is evidenced by India's poor performance across various socio-economic indicators, reflecting a low considerably female-male labour force participation rate, high maternal-mortality rate, low women's literacy levels and a low representation of women in Parliament compared to other countries in South Asia and other regions. The government's low social and economic investment in promoting the freedom of women in both individual and social capacity, and ensuring equitable development, remain the key factors responsible for a rising gender imbalance.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 17.1

1. What was the status of women in ancient, medieval, and modern India?
2. Explain the need for Labour laws in India.

17.2 Constitution of India and Labour Legislations

The Preamble of the Indian constitution secures Justice – Social, Economic and Political, Liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship, Equality of status and opportunity;

fraternity, assuring the dignity and unity of the individual and integrity of the nation. These principles enshrined in the Preamble provide a bedrock for framing all labour and social legislations and their progressive and creative interpretation in favour of the working classes.

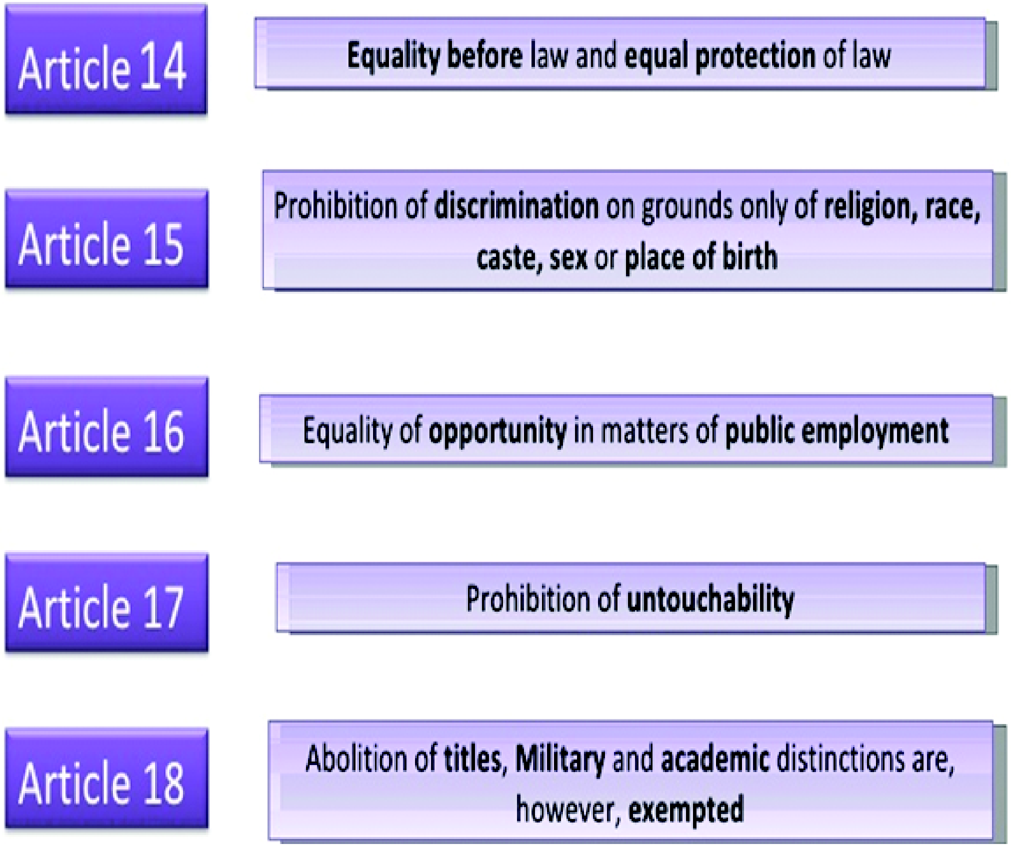


Fig. 17.1 Our Rights in the Constitution of India

Article 14 of the Constitution ensures that the State shall not deny to any person the equality before the law and equal protection of the laws. There shall be no discrimination based on religion, race, caste, sex and place of birth. Article 15 guarantees the right against discrimination. Article 15(3) talks about special protection for women. Article 16 provides the right to equal opportunity in terms of public employment, irrespective of gender. Article 19 guarantees freedom of speech and expression, to assemble peaceably and without arms, to form associations and unions; to move freely throughout the territory of India, to reside and settle in any part of the country, to practice any profession, or to take up any occupation or trade. Another fundamental right dealing with children is Article 24: Prohibition of Employment of Children in Factories, i.e. the legislation such as the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986. Article 39 talks about certain principles of policy that need to be followed by the State, which are securing adequate means of livelihood equally for men and women, equal pay for equal work to men and women, and the health and strength of workers, both of men and women are not abused. Article 42 requires the State to make provision for securing humane work conditions

Notes

and maternity relief. Article 45 provides for early childhood care and education to children below the age of six. The State has to provide early childhood care and education to all children. The Constitution of India contains provisions for the survival, development and protection of children. Article 51A(k) makes it a fundamental duty of the parents or guardians to provide opportunities for education to children or wards between the ages 6 and 14. In 2002, the Indian Parliament provided the Right to Education through a constitutional amendment and passed the Right to Education Act 2009.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 17.2

1. List the important constitutional provisions for the promotion of equality.
2. State the provisions made in the constitution of India to abolish exploitation.

17.3 WOMEN AND LABOUR LAWS – NEED FOR SPECIAL TREATMENT?

The industrial laws bestow upon women special rights owing to their unique physical, mental and biological attributes. These laws are a combination of pre-independence and post-independence laws. These Acts regulate various aspects related to the workspace, for instance, work hours, health, safety and welfare of women workers to ensure guaranteed equality before the law and equal treatment to women workers. These laws were enacted based on conventions and recommendations adopted by the International Labour Organization (ILO) to increase the efficiency of women and improve their participation in useful services while also ensuring infant welfare and the provision of equal pay for equal work.

Some of the important labour legislations enacted for the welfare of women are:

17.3.1 The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961

- **"The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 (53 Of 1961)"**: This Act was put in enacted to regulate the employment of women in certain establishments before and after child-birth along with providing maternity and certain other benefits to women.

Maternity leave and its benefits protect the dignity of motherhood. In addition, they provide for the full and healthy maintenance of the woman at work and her child. Today, as more women are joining the workforce, provisions for maternity leave and other benefits are provided at the workplace.

This legislation provides that

1. The woman will not be asked to join work for six weeks after the delivery or in case of miscarriage.

Notes

2. Maternity benefits will be given in terms of wages as prescribed under the Act.

3. The woman shall become eligible for the maternity benefits under this Act only if she has worked for the employer for the period not less than one hundred and sixty days during the twelve months immediately preceding the date of her expected delivery.

4. The woman can avail of a maximum of 12 weeks of leave.

5. No woman shall be asked to do the kind of work that can harm her or her child's health during pregnancy.

6. Women who have a miscarriage or tubectomy shall be entitled to the same benefits.

7. An additional period of one month shall be allowed to a woman suffering from illness arising out of pregnancy, delivery, or premature birth of a child (Miscarriage, medical termination of pregnancy or tubectomy operation) along with the period of absence allowed to her as leave with wages at the form of maternity benefit.

17.3.2 Creche Facility

Crèche facility is referred to the day care services for the children. In 2017, by an amendment, Section 11A was inserted in the Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 which mandated a crèche facility in the establishment with more than fifty employees. The employee is allowed to visit the crèche four times a day.

(1) Every establishment having fifty or more employees shall have the facility of crèche within such distance as may be prescribed, either separately or along with common facilities: Provided that the employer shall allow four visits a day for the woman, which shall also include the interval for rest allowed to her. (2) Every establishment shall intimate the benefits in writing and electronically to every woman at the time of her appointment available under the Act.

In addition, the government , on May 18, 2017, rolled out a notification which added another rule under Maternity Benefit (Mines and Circus) Act, 1963. It provides that the creche service has to be made available within 500 meters from the entry of the establishment, and it shall also provide common facilities.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 17.3

1. Explain the need for bestowing a special status to women under labour laws.

2. Explain the main features of 'The Maternity Benefit Act 1961'.

Notes

17.4 THE EQUAL REMUNERATION ACT, 1976

Equality in matters of wages significantly impacts respect and dignity at work. Equal pay for equal work for women and men, becomes a vital subject to be considered while enacting laws to ensure a non-discriminatory environment at work. It was perceived that women were physically weak and should be paid less for the same piece of work done. This perception was later exploited by factory owners who ———— women as cheap labour. Since there was less attention given to the protection of workers, women were conditioned and recruited at lower wages because the conditions of work were not good.

ILO works for the protection of working women. Many of its conventions are ratified by India. The conventions which have not been ratified are accepted in principle. Article 39 of the Constitution of India is one such directive based upon the principles of ILO. It directs the State to secure equal pay for equal work for men and women. The Equal Remuneration Act 1976 was passed by the Parliament to actualise this directive principle. The Act provides for the payment of an equal amount of remuneration to men and women workers for the same or similar type of work performed by them. In addition, it prohibits discrimination of any form in the recruitment process and provision of service conditions except where the employment of women is prohibited or restricted by the law.

"**National Policy for the Empowerment of Women in 2001**" was adopted by the Government of India to bring in gender justice and transform *de jure* equality into *de facto* equality. Many State Governments formulated policies for woman's empowerment. The implementation of these policies is taken care of by National and State Councils. Members of the Councils include officials and representatives of non-governmental organizations, trade unions, academics, experts, social activists, etc. they review the progress of the policies twice a year. The aim of the policy is to:

- Work for the advancement, development and empowerment of women in all spheres of life
- Develop a more responsive judicial and legal systems which are sensitive to women's needs
- Involve more women actively in decision-making by ensuring women's equality in power-sharing
- Mainstream a gender perspective in the development process
- Bring forth comprehensive economic and social empowerment of women
- Strengthen the formation of relevant institutions and their mechanisms

- Partner with community-based organizations to make women's empowerment wholesome
- Implement international obligations/commitments and promote cooperation at the international, regional, and sub-regional levels.

"National Policy for the Empowerment of Women in 2016":

National Policy for the Empowerment of Women in 2001 was amended in 2016 with the following three dimensions:

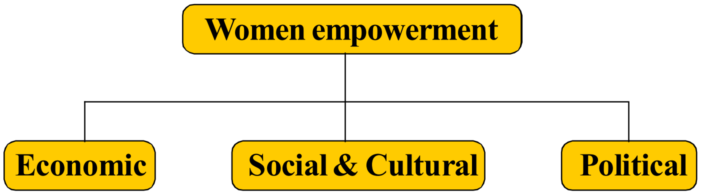


Fig. 17.2 Dimensions of Women's Empowerment

This policy has the following objectives-

- Creating a conducive social, cultural, economic, and political environment for women which would enable them to enjoy the fundamental rights and realize their full potential.
- Mainstreaming gender in all-round development processes/programs/projects and actions.
- Designing a holistic and life cycle approach for promoting women's health by making arrangements for appropriate, affordable and quality healthcare.
- Improving and incentivizing access of women's /girls' right to universal and quality education.
- Increasing and incentivizing participation of women in the workforce.
- Promoting equal participation of women in social, political and economic spheres, including the institutions of governance and institutions of decision-making.
- Transforming discriminatory social attitudes, and mindsets with community involvement and engagement of men and boys
- Developing judicial and legal systems which are gender sensitive.
- Strategizing the elimination of all forms of violence against women through strengthening policies, legislations, programs, institutions and community engagement.

Notes

- Focusing on the development and empowerment of women, especially those belonging to vulnerable and marginalized groups.
- Building and strengthening stakeholders' participation and partnerships for women's empowerment.
- Strengthening, monitoring, evaluating, auditing and building data systems to bridge gender gaps.

17.5 THE MINIMUM WAGES ACT, 1948 (FACTORIES ACT 1948)

The availability of cheap labour in the market can easily affect the rate of paid wages. To prevent the exploitation of labour, the Minimum Wage Act was passed. This Act was enacted to securing the welfare of the workers in a competitive market and providing minimum wages to both skilled and unskilled labour. The Act lays down that the central government shall fix the minimum wages of employment. They have been provided in the Schedule of the Act. They refer to various employments covered under the Act like those carried on by or under the authority of the Central Government, by railway administration or in relation to a mine, oilfield or major port, or any corporation established by a Central Act, and by the state government for the other employments. Under these provisions, the Act intends to prevent the exploitation of workers by fixing the minimum wages that an employer must pay.

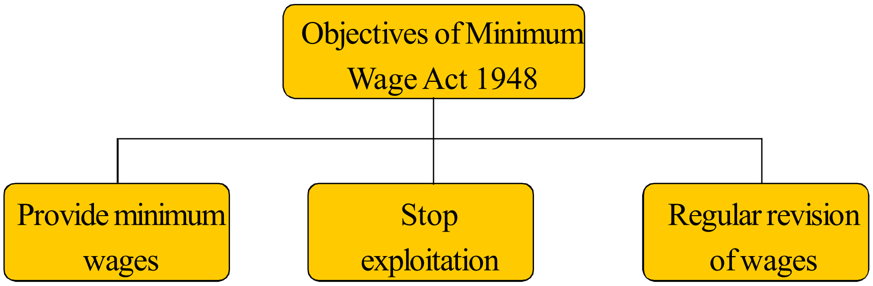


Figure 17.3 Components of the Minimum Wage Act 1948

The minimum wages are fixed, keeping in mind the fulfillment of the physical needs of a worker as well as preserving his efficiency as a worker. However, the process of fixing the minimum wage has yet to be defined in the Act. There is no guideline as to what should be taken into consideration while fixing the minimum wage. Consequently, different sets of principles in fixing or revising the minimum wages have been followed by different wage-fixing authorities.

There are four main types of wages. These are:

a. **Subsistence Wage:** - Subsistence wage includes the wage which can only meet the bare physical needs of a worker and his family.

b. **Minimum Wage:** - The wage that is able to provide for the bare physical needs as well as preserve the efficiency of workers, including some measure of education, health and other expenses is called Minimum Wage.

c. **Fair Wage**: - Fair wage counts the capacity of the industry to pay at the prevailing rates of wages in the particular industry and is, therefore, an adjustable step that moves up the level of wage.

d. **Living Wage:** - Lastly, there is the living wage which enables the workers to maintain the health and decency of their living by allowing them a measure of comfort and some insurance against the more important misfortune of life.

Notes

The minimum wage must be paid irrespective of the extent of profits earned by the establishment, its financial condition and the availability of other workmen at lower wages. The wages must always be fair. This means that wages must be sufficiently high to provide for the worker his family with food, shelter, clothing, medical care and education of children. A fair wage lies between the minimum wage and the living wage.

The level of paid wages holds fundamental importance since they help sustain the living standards of wage earners and their families, irrespective of the level of economic development. They also indicate economic progress and social justice that the State can make. Discrimination may take multiple forms and, thus, may lead to a various outcome. The most common outcome is the reduction of rewards and skills put in by the discriminated group. This greatly impacts women in all countries. However, the extent of the impact may differ in different countries. ILO, through its multiple programmes, aims to reduce this discrimination. To support this, the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work provides for the freedom to organize and negotiate conditions of work, the freedom from forced or compulsory labour, the freedom to protect children from requirements to work and the freedom from discrimination in employment and occupation.

Despite efforts at national and international levels, the employment and employment conditions of women have not been up to the mark. Labour surplus, unemployment and under-employment add to this problem, and women remain out of the realm of economic activity. The economic reasons act as an additional costs in the process and further impede women's employment. The statutory obligation on an employer to pay the maternity benefit is considered a burden by the employer. It causes hesitation on the part of the employer to employ a woman. Some employers are, thus, interested in recruiting only unmarried women with the condition that they will resign upon getting married. This is a discriminatory, unfair and highly unjust practice.

Notes

INTEXT QUESTIONS 17.4

1. Explain the benefits of 'The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976'.
2. Describe the main features of 'The Minimum Wages Act 1948'.
3. Highlight the main aims of the National policy for the empowerment of women in 2001.
4. Name the different types of wages.

WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

- Various legislations are passed to curb the imbalances created by gender hierarchies and to promote women's empowerment. The Constitution of India also makes special provisions and guarantees various rights to women. These rights and duties of the State are enumerated under Part III of the Constitution, dealing with fundamental rights and Part IV, dealing with the Directives Principles of State Policy, respectively. For securing gender justice for working women, enactments like The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961, The Equal Remuneration Act 1976, The Factories Act 1948 were passed.
- The constitutional provisions and other legislations reflect the intention to promote gender equality. However, the implementation of the provisions remains challenging. As a result, women continue to face the same form of discrimination. Along with ineffective enforcement, lack of awareness is another reason behind it. These laws have not been able to break the social norms of patriarchy, subjugation of women within the family, deep-rooted traditions and customs and male chauvinism.
- India needs to focus on effective implementation of laws and the effective redressal mechanisms. The best way is to mobilize the grassroots participation of individuals, enterprises and employers.

TERMINAL EXERCISE

1. Highlight the main aims of the National Policy for the Empowerment of Women, 2001.
2. State different legislations enacted by the government to protect the interest of women.
3. Explain the reasons for enacting the labour laws.
4. Contact any 10 women you know and ask the following questions. Draw inferences based on the collected information.

Q. No.	Question	Response
1.	Have you ever experienced discrimination?	
2.	Do you face domestic violence?	
3.	Do you get equal pay as men get?	
4.	Are you able to oppose the discrimination on your own	

You may add more questions to the list. Later based on the replies, write a report on the work status of women.

ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

17.1

1. In ancient India, women enjoyed a respectable and equal status with men. In the medieval period, discrimination against women had set in. In modern India, the constitution has granted equality to all citizens, and no discrimination is allowed based on sex. Although some problems are there for women in practice, the scenario is changing, and gender equality is being felt.

2. (a) To achieve the goal of equality for women workers

   (b) To promote the freedom of women

   (c) To ensure participatory equitable development.

17.2

1. (a) Article 14 — "The state shall not deny to any person the equality before the law or equal protection of laws."

   (b) Article 15 — guarantees right for the right against discrimination

   (c) Article 16 — guarantees the right to equal opportunities in public employ ment

2. Article 24 — guarantees the right to the prohibition of employment of children in factories etc.

   Article 39 — ensures equal pay for equal work to both sexes.

Notes

Article 42 directs the State to make the provision for securing human conditions of work and maternity relief for women.

Article 45 provides the directive for early childhood care and education to chil dren.

Article 51A directs the State to provide free and compulsory education to chil dren aged 6 to 14 years.

17.3

1. (i) Because of women's unique physical and biological characteristics.

   (ii) For the safety, security, and health of the women.

2. Features of the "Maternity Benefit Act 1961"

   (i) It provides for allowing maternity leave to women, different maternity benefits, full wages for the period of maternity leave, a creche facility for the newborn etc.

17.4

1. Benefits of 'The equal remuneration act 1976'.

   (a) It ensured equal pay for equal work

   (b) It abolished discrimination in recruitment and service conditions.

2. (i) It fixes the minimum wages for skilled and unskilled labour.

   (ii) Fixed minimum wages ensure the fulfillment of the needs of the workers.

   (iii) Minimum wages Act does not define what minimum wages are. Because of this, different wage fixing authorities follow different sets of principles in fixing or revising the minimum wages.

3. (i) Work for the advancement, development and empowerment of women in all spheres of life

   (ii) Develop a more responsive judicial and legal systems which are sensitive to women's needs

   (iii) Involve more women actively in decision making by ensuring women's equality in power sharing

   (iv) Comprehensive empowerment of women (economic, social)

(v) Partnership with community-based organizations for wholesome impact.

(vi) Implementation of international obligations for promoting gender equality.

4. (i) Subsistence wages (ii) Minimum wages (iii) Fair wages (iv) Living wages

Notes

MODULE -6

Gender and Media

The module seeks to highlight the relationship between gender and language and how one impacts the other.The module familiarizes the learner with the impact of print and visual media on gender equality and society in India. This module also discusses the role and impact of new media social change as an agent.

18. Gender and Language
19. Media representation of Gender
20. New Media and Social Change

18

GENDER AND LANGUAGE

Imagine a world without language! Language is the primary communication channel humans use to connect, share, and express their thoughts and views. Language caters to the basic need of humans to talk and reciprocate through words, signs and writing.

Language is specific to a social group, community, and society, which are the spaces both men and women inhabit. While speaking, it is to be noticed that men and women are addressed differently. The differentiated words and terminologies used for men and women are significant components of a language spoken worldwide. These refer to the particular sex category and cast men and women in separate compartments.

The reference to the sex category in a social context is gender. When the language is spoken in the context of gender, it usually refers to the social definition of men and women as they exist, interacts, and carry out specific roles and responsibilities. This lesson presents the relationship between gender and language and how one impacts the other.

OUTCOMES

After completing this lesson, learner:

- describes the key approaches to the understanding of gender and language;
- explores the relation of gender and language in general;
- reflects on the use of gender-specific vocabulary;
- explains the role of language in promoting gender equality in society.

Notes

18.1 THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The study of gender and language has been increasingly prevalent since the early 1990s. Then, men and women were considered two distinctive humans with different personality attributes. The literature and books at that time were the major contributors to this school of thought. They reiterated the fundamental difference between men and women and claimed that women used more socially acceptable language than men.

It is generally perceived that women prefer to talk, but men choose action above words. Women see speech as a method to connect emotionally with people, whereas men see speaking as either a functional tool or a competitive sport. Women are better at listening, creating rapport, and avoiding or defusing conflict than men, who approach each other more directly and are less sensitive to their own or others' feelings.

The gender and language inequalities constituted the central point of prevalent theories. These key theories are as follows:

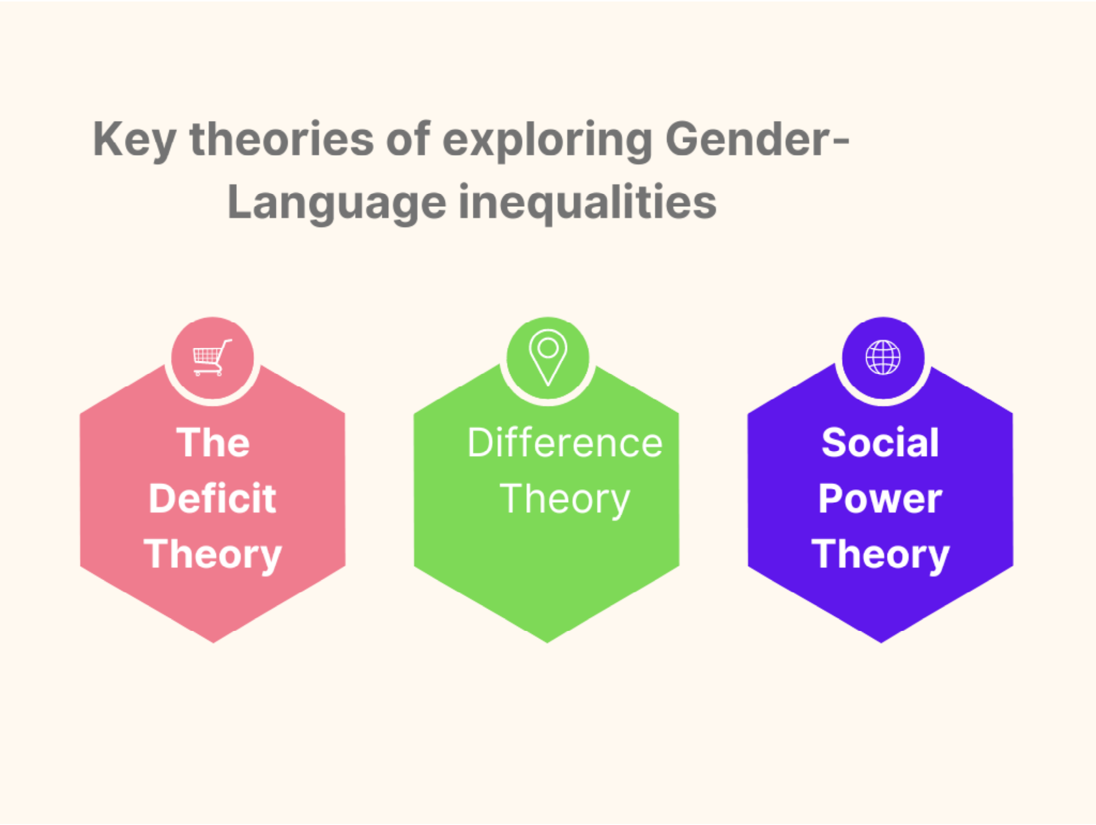


Fig 18.1: Key theories of exploring Gender-Language inequalities

- **The Deficit Theory**–This theory was based on the belief that men have specific attributes that women lack. Therefore, men tried to control women in all sectors and kept all the vocations to themselves .

- **Difference Theory**–In this theory, the socialisation process was the pivotal point that argued that boys and girls are socialised differently at home, in the family and schools etc. This difference in their socialisation refers to gender disparities between boys and girls. This is also known as Two Culture Theory because it represents differences owing to different cultures and socio-cultural practices.

- **Social Power Theory**–Emerging in the1990s, also known as the Modern approach, it considers language a tool for establishing social structure and power. It implies understanding the language regarding the underplaying power dynamics concerning who, why, and how a subject is to be conveyed.

Notes

18.2 EXPLORING LINKAGES BETWEEN LANGUAGE AND GENDER

Language and Gender: The differentiated language used for men and women and the link between the two come under the term "language and gender". Social reference to men and women in the context of gender constitutes a part of our general communication. As we know that gender differences exist as social facts are reiterated and followed as per the norms of society.

In the context of language, gender disparities are reflected in two major domains:

- **The Statements:** Men and women compose their statements differently. For example, the men, being the traditional power dominant, compose their statements as a mix of power and authority. On the other hand, women are groomed for a subordinate role, and therefore, their statements may reflect more adjustment and compliance.

- **Distinct lifestyles and attitudes:** The male and female lifestyles are different and determine the words and their connotations differently. For example, men are known to communicate directly, focusing on information and knowledge. On the other hand, women tend to speak indirectly, implicitly, and gently. In addition, while their emotions manifest when talking, men tend to suppress or hide their feelings during communication with others.

Notes

Fig 18.2: While men present authoritatively, women present humbly

ACTIVITY 18.1

Relate the following words with men and women –

Words	Men	Women	Both Men+Women	None of the Men & Women
Gentle & loving				
Aggressive & angry				
Authoritarian				
Complying & adjusting				

18.2.1 Gender and communication in everyday life

Researchers have repeatedly demonstrated that gender impacts language acquisition, development, and use. In addition, they have pointed to a strong relationship between gender and language in different historical and cultural contexts.

In our daily life communications, we feel two distinct concepts represented through speech, signs and acts. These are masculinity and femininity, evident through how people dress, choose colours and move around in social life. For example, a man wears pants and a shirt, chooses dull colours and moves around authoritatively, conveying that he is an important leader in his own right. On the other hand, a woman may choose flashy dresses and bright colours and move around adhering to social norms and behaviour. In both cases, the man and woman

Notes

convey their relationship to the social construct of gender and how they identify themselves with the categories of man and woman. This gets engrained deeply and may impact the words they use to communicate every day. One thing that becomes very clear here is that gender is imposed by society and has resulted in gender communication that conforms to behaviour and conduct as dictated by society.

Several researchers have studied the relationship between gender and language. In 1972, Robin Lakoff was the first to raise the issue of the relationship between gender and language through his article' Language and Woman's Place'. He believed that women generally use lower/subordinate linguistic forms than men. For example, women use more tags like *Isn't it?* Or *Am I*? which are questioning expressions that mean as if not too sure or *I think*. They imply the need to be acknowledged or a presumption that they may be incorrect.

Following Lackoff's argument, there was a discussion about why women spoke in terms of submissive language. The reasons provided were difference and dominance, both attributing to a disparity between the genders.

"The worthier is favoured and set before...let us retain a natural order and set the male before the woman for manners' sake," - Thomas Wilson, The Arte of Rhetorique, a definitive guide and English literary success published in 1553.

The impact of gender on language is also seen in how language develops and how people tend to express themselves based on gender. For example, women tend to use language more relationally or in the context of close relationships with others. Women also tend to have a broader range of emotional vocabulary, using language more readily to describe their feelings and emotional states.

Conversely, men tend to use language more assertively and are more likely to suppress or hold back their emotions. As a result, men tend not to express their emotions through language. If seen in a social context, men are expected not to cry and brood but be instant in solution hunting.

It is highly beneficial to have a broad understanding of gender and language in sociolinguistics. This is because language is an important communicative instrument in human society that evolves with society to create a favourable ecosystem for growth.

Notes

ACTIVITY 18.2

Strike the following statements -Correct or Wrong.

S. No.	Statement	Correct	Wrong	Not sure
1.	Women are afraid to speak			
2.	Men should speak assertively			
3.	Bad women use foul language/words			
4.	Men should talk like a leader			
5.	Men should speak the aggressive language because they are men			
6.	Women should speak gently.			

INTEXT QUESTIONS 18.1

1. Cite the reasons why difference theory can also be called as Two Culture Theory?
2. How does gender differentiate the language spoken by men and women?
3. Is it correct that men use authoritarian words and women use compliant words while talking to others? Justify your answer with suitable arguments.

18.3 USE OF GENDER-SPECIFIC VOCABULARY

Language may hurt or offend others if it is not used carefully. It is common to hear that one should choose the words carefully. When we talk about the choice of words in the context of gender, it becomes all the more important to ensure that we do not inadvertently use language considered sexist. In recent decades, some words and expressions can be seen as discriminating against women. These may be seen in three contexts:

a) The words are based on male terminology. For example, occupations like people in business or mail carriers (Postman) are predominantly male and expressed in terms of their sex. If a woman is a postman, she would also be addressed as a postman. There is no gender-neutral version of a word for a female postman.

b) The words appear to give women a less important status than the male equivalent. While a man is called an actor, the woman is called an actress. If the male is a steward, the female is a stewardess.

c) The gender-neutral words are very few. In the contemporary era of technology and advancement, words are compartmentalised into feminine and muscular categories. If gender-neutral words exist, they are hardly used in day-to-day communication. The use of plurals can help offset masculine-based writing.

Notes

Following are a few words that are coined separately for men and women. These words also have gender-neutral connotations. However, they are sparingly used in everyday communication.

Masculine	Feminine	Gender Neutral
man	woman	person
father	mother	parent
boy	girl	child
Uncle	Aunt	Relative
Chairman Actor (Male	Actor (female)	Chairperson

INTEXT QUESTIONS 18.2

1. Give two gender-neutral words of people engaged in different occupations.

2. Do we address men and women differently in our everyday language?

18.4 ROLE OF LANGUAGE IN PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY

A language is a potent tool used to speak, share, and express the thought process of humans who have developed codes of words and signs to communicate with each other. Humans have developed language to communicate, work together as a cohesive force, and sustain the human race over generations.

Let us not forget that language exists in a continually changing social context; it is influenced not just by gender but also by social, cultural, and psychological aspects. Therefore, in the world of language marred by gender disparities and differentiation, there must be a transformative change in how language is used.

Notes

1. **Gender-fair language (GFL)** was developed in response to gender-based structural disparity. It was meant to minimise gender stereotyping and prejudice in language. It aimed to eliminate gender disparities in addressing and referring to men and women, for example, by replacing masculine forms (policeman) with gender-unmarked forms (police officer) or by utilising both masculine and feminine forms (i.e., the applicant... he or she instead of the applicant. he).

2. **Gender disparities in language should be minimised.** References to people's personalities and communicative styles should be independent of gender. The words used to discriminate against men and women should be discouraged. For example, using words such as chairperson instead of chairman in normal communication should be encouraged.

3. **Sexist language to avoid:** The sexual undertones of language create a marked gulf between men and women. The use of particular words demeans women in the form of jokes, fun statements and mockery of being a woman. These reiterate the gender stereotypical perception of women and their perspective and promote casual sexism that targets women in jobs and informal conversations. For example, the teacher says to Geeta in class that she cannot shift the heavy desk because she is a girl.

4. **Similarities to include:** Some studies on gender and language overemphasise the differences. These studies ignore the similarities and fail to account for context, variance, and other aspects of gender. The similarities between males and females should be considered to obtain a comprehensive and objective explanation for the connection between males and females because they play the same significant role. For example, they are referring to both boys and girls in the class being equally capable and competent to succeed.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 18.3

1. Describe the purpose of using gender fair language for maintaining gender equality.

2. Explain with examples how gender disparities in language can be minimized?

WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

- Language is the primary communication channel humans use to connect, share, and express their thoughts and views. Language is specific to a social group, community, and society, which are the spaces both men and women inhabit. However, it is common

Notes

to notice that men and women speak different language tones. In addition, the choice of words and the way to speak differently. These refer to the particular sex category and cast men and women in separate compartments.

- Several researchers have studied the relationship between gender and language. In 1972, Robin Lakoff was the first to raise the issue of the relationship between gender and language through his article' Language and Woman's Place'. He believed that women generally use lower/subordinate linguistic forms than men.
- Following Lackoff's argument, there was a discussion about why women speak in terms of submissive language. The reasons provided were difference and dominance, both attributing to a disparity between the genders.
- Gender-fair language (GFL) was developed in response to gender-based structural disparity. It was meant to minimise gender stereotyping and language prejudice by replacing masculine forms (policeman) with gender-unmarked forms (police officer).
- The studies on gender and language fail to account for context, variance, and other aspects of gender. The language should be such that both genders are considered equally capable and competent to succeed. In other words, gender-neutral aspects of language need to be emphasised.

TERMINAL EXERCISE

1. Why does gender affect how people acquire, develop, and express themselves through language?
2. How does Social Power Theory define language?
3. Who was the first to raise the relationship between gender and language?
4. Do you think that sexist language is used in schools?

ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

18.1

1. Difference theory can also be called as Two Culture Theory because it represents differences owing to different cultures and socio-cultural practices.
2. Gender conditions the language spoken by men and women. The patriarchal set-up and dominance of male power dictate the choice of words and manner of speaking in public and private spheres.

Notes

3. Yes, it is correct to say so. During socialisation, women are groomed for a subordinate role and are expected to adjust. This affects the language they use, which is kind, humble and compliant. On the other hand, men are taught to be commanding and powerful, which reflects in the choice of words used by them which are authoritarian.

18.2

1. Female-Carpenter, Male-Teacher

2. Yes, we address men as Mister and women as Mrs (Missus)

18.3

1. It was meant to minimize gender stereotyping and prejudice in language. It aimed to eliminate gender disparities in addressing and referring to men and women

2. Use of words such as chairpersons instead of chairman in normal communication should be encouraged.

19

MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF GENDER

In the previous lesson, you have learnt about different usages of gender and language in media. Media has emerged as an influential and powerful entity as a powerful mechanism for education and socialisation. Media has transcended channels of communication to new heights. Media has developed to the extent that it can mould and give direction to public opinion in a specific direction. It has started shaping the perception and consent of individuals over various issues. Its reach to every possible individual through different communication means has transformed communications. You have also understood the complex use and abuse of vocabulary in media, indicating regressive mindsets about gender relations in our society.

This lesson explains the way of representation of Gender on different media and its consequences.

OUTCOMES

After studying this lesson, learner:

- describes the different forms of electronic media such as (television, radio, films, internet), print newspapers, magazines etc. and traditional/media such as folklore, songs, street theatre etc.
- identifies reinforcement of gender stereotypes in media
- explores the impact of gender stereotypes in media
- appreciates the efforts to mainstream gender into the media

19.1 VARIOUS FORMS OF MEDIA

Media is the plural form of the word 'medium', which is 'one of the means of general communication, information, or entertainment in society, as newspaper, radio, or television'. It

subscribes to the mode of communication through various electronic and print channels. Since the beneficiaries are a huge population group transcending national and geographical boundaries, media is usually denoted as a mass communication channel. Therefore, on the same front, media is now denoted as 'the mass media'.

You surely have been exposed to different media. However, through this chapter, you will be able to understand the unique features of different forms of media. Now you will study the nature, emergence and significance of various types of media over the years.

In our discussion, we will focus on the importance of media being gender sensitive and their role in promoting gender equity.

Women constitute nearly 50 percent of the country's population. They are visible in the national media, both in electronic and print. However, several systematic research studies point out that media has not ensured adequate space and time for women to participate in all media forms. For example, the coverage of issues concerning women does not get prime-time attention on popular T.V. and radio channels. Print media also do not give them enough space and coverage.

Gender Stereotypes and their reflections on media

For centuries, it was believed that the different characteristics of women and men are natural and are determined by biological (sex-based) differences. Hence, being aggressive or domineering or not expressing emotions is viewed as natural for men and being emotional or submissive and being sensitive and caring are the traits of women. However, we have many men around us who are emotional, expressive and caring. Are they not men? Similarly, we find many women who are aggressive and domineering. So, these personality traits are those of individual human beings and not of a man or a woman. This deep-rooted system makes socially constructed gender roles seem invincible and natural. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the distinction between the two to understand why we need to work to overcome these stereotypes.

Men who may be aggressive and domineering in the house could be fearful in front of their superiors in the office. Thus, men may take on masculine (aggressive, domineering) traits when they are in power and behave in a so-called feminine way (follow orders, be submissive) when they are in a subordinate position. This implies that these traits have more to do with power and social relations than the biology of being a female or a male.

You are well aware that there are two sets of roles - biological based on sex and gender, which are socially constructed. The process of socialisation immediately starts after birth and decides the attributed roles and responsibilities of an individual as per their gender. Even the kind of toys children are given to play with is enough for the child to imbibe the gendered messages, e.g. giving dolls and kitchen sets to girls as a preparation for them to later intake on

Notes

the responsibilities of housekeeping, childbearing and caring. On the other hand, giving the building blocks and toy guns to boys to become warriors, protectors and breadwinners of the family. While the 'ideal' is worshipped, the 'real' is neglected. Some sacred texts consider women as Mother Goddess as Durga, Kali, and Lakshmi, and she is believed to represent divine power (shakti). In practice, however, they may be suppressed, face deprivations and get exploited in the patriarchal set-up. They are denied equal rights in marital, familial, social, educational, economic and political fields.

The dislike for daughters is deeply rooted in our culture. Many of the rituals and traditions reinforce the primacy of a male child. For example, there are rituals and blessings like kua pujan (ceremony on the birth of a baby boy), a bride being blessed to 'doodho nahao, pooto phalo (May you be blessed with plenty of resources and sons). These rituals underline the importance of begetting a son. Incidentally, even the most educated tend to follow these rituals. However, now some people celebrate their daughters' birth, which reflects the change in traditional mindsets.

The messages of socialisation, overtly or covertly, are passed from different institutions of society, including family, religion, law media, and the powerful medium of communication in today's time.

It is believed that one way to judge a nation's state is to study women's status. In reality, the status of women represents the standard of culture prevalent in any age. The social status of women in a country symbolises the social spirit of the age. The status enjoyed by Indian women is far short of expectations. Our country is growing economically but is not developing socially due to the lack of participation of women in the development process.

19.1.1 Role of Media

Media is not only a mirror of society but is also an instrument of social change. It plays a vital role in the dissemination of information and is therefore called the fourth pillar of democracy. Mass media has a tremendous impact on the minds of people, with constant exposure to information divulged by it. Media is the carrier of information, ideas, thoughts and opinions. Mass media channels are in a big way instrumental in motivating people's behaviour and attitudes in a certain way.

Various media can be used positively to propagate healthier values in our society. With the unforeseen expansion, media has acquired the capacity to set new trends, bring social transformation and reduce social injustice. It has a unique role in developing social & cultural values and socialisation. It can also play a vital role in altering the media depiction of gender roles, aspirations and expectations to bring about a more diverse and just society and be a catalyst for change.

From traditional media to the new media, from age-old scriptures or books on moral teachings to new-age contemporary stories, from puppetry or folk music to radio, from television to the internet and other social networking platforms, all contribute and strengthen the given gender roles and expectations. In addition, the portrayal of men and women engaged in different life spheres playing different roles in media influences the socialisation process and people's opinions on gender roles.

It is important to analyse the representation of gender in media critically. It is the first step necessary to provide evidence to the producers of media and sensitise them to be progressive in their outlook. Furthermore, they must be aware of their critical role in triggering change with changing times.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 19.1

1. What is meant by socialisation?
2. State the different forms of media.
3. Explain the meaning of being gender sensitive.

19.2 PRINT MEDIA

Print media is one of the oldest and most basic forms of mass communication. It includes newspapers, journals, weeklies, monthlies, and other printed media forms. It has held the core part of mass communication for decades and has immensely contributed to the field.

Media contributes to the transfer of knowledge and information. Print media still stands to hold an important place in communication. This is due to its advantage in making a long-term impact on the readers' minds and an in-depth analysis of events and happenings.

NEWSPAPERS

Newspapers are used and have become an important part of routine life for billions of people. News is the brief report of every important event occurring daily. News helps us to ease our life and make us more responsive to the dynamic needs of society.

The Indian newspaper immediately contributed to the socio-cultural awakening of Indians and the consolidation of nationality during the colonial rule of the British Empire. Their contribution to the freedom movement is also significant. Most of the newspapers emerged during the period of freedom struggle. Newspapers like the Pioneer (1866), the Amrit Bazar Patrika (1868), the Statesman (1875), the Hindu (1887), and the Tribune (1880) emerged during this period. Though many vanished over time, a few are still in publication.

Notes

The profession associated with newspapers is called Journalism, and the individuals who choose to work for newspapers are called Journalists. Though the primary task of journalists is to report the daily happenings from a neutral perspective without any biases, they also include other news-related activities. Furthermore, the nature of the job includes professional ethics and social sensitivity, which makes it important that journalists are also sensitised to gender just representation in their reporting.

19.2.1 Other Forms of Print Media

We all know the importance of print media. It would be interesting to know that 'the media' came as a phrase came to be used in the 1920s. Furthermore, what we call 'the mass media' was generally restricted to print media until the end of the Second World War.

Print Media and Gender

Mass media has long been responsible for being society's watchdog and guiding social change. A watchdog refers to a person, institution or organisation that monitors and publicises the behaviour of others to discover the activities are not in the interest of society. However, mass media is a domain primarily dominated by men. The media house owners, reporters, and editors are predominantly men. Therefore, discriminatory images of women are created since the media products are created by men, according to their interests.

Women's issues do not occupy enough space in print media. It has improved over the years, but the coverage is mainly about the atrocities on women and not on the bright side of their achievements in various domains, which may be fewer but is significant. In other words, the coverage of women's issues is inadequate and full of socio-cultural biases.

The stereotypical image of women, highlighting their full-time involvement in cooking, family care, and other domestic chores, represents them as the subordinate and weaker sex. They are hardly seen being interviewed or asked for their opinions on prominent national matters. Women are typically portrayed as homemakers and are hardly seen as politicians, newsmakers, business leaders and subject experts. Most coverage about women is about the violence against women and their domestic issues. They are common, represented by physical appearance and sexualised images. Merely using them as sexual objects for selling products is unjust. It strongly reinforces stereotypical gender roles and identities. In print media, the headlines, cover pages, photos, and placement of articles play a significant role in putting up the undesirable representation of women.

The visibility of women in the news is widely covered on special days like Women's Day and Mother's Day. On other days, the news coverage is generally about sensational stories of glamour, forms of violence and sex. The weekend special magazines highlight luxurious news items of beauty and fashion with sensational photographs of women on the cover page. This adversely affects the perception of the younger readers who internalise the idea of being

Notes

skinny, fair, and beautiful in set ways. It may go to the level of developing eating disorders among them.

19.3 The Cinema

Hindi Cinema has been a major source of propagating Indian culture. It has long been the platform for exhibiting the changing scenarios of modern India that no other medium can do at such a scale. It can potentially influence the viewers' perception of their life perspectives. Over the past few years, films have been claimed to break the stereotypes related to women. To name a few, the roles played by Nargis in Mother India (1957), Priyanka Chopra in Fashion (2008), and Waheeda Rehman in Guide (1957) have been quite powerful for the times in which they were made.

Despite a few Bollywood films' progress, the objectification of women still persists, as seen through the exotic item numbers. The primacy of a woman's traditional role as a mother and a wife is reiterated. The woman's dress appearance reinforces cultural signs like the mangal sutra and sindoor as the symbols of marriage.

In Kuch Kuch Hota Hai, Tina, a young college girl, is shown dressed in a mini skirt during a ragging scene which amazes the entire college crowd, who chant singing a bhajan. This scene is followed by her dialogue about how she has not forgotten her "Bhartiya Sanskriti" even after living abroad in a Western country. This film was a huge box office hit, pushing ahead such norms for the youth, who comprise most of the audience.

The Indian cinema has been rolling out films where men are pursuing their dreams, aspirations, desires, and heroism. The women are primarily portrayed as their lovers, wives, or mothers. A woman is rarely seen acting independently and capable of making decisions.

Even cinematic elements like lighting, camera focus, and shots are set according to the body placement of the actress and the audience's eyes. The movements of the actress's body add up to the gaze, selectively focusing on specific body parts- the eyes, lips, breasts, buttocks, and legs.

From time to time, the number of films raising social issues increases, like Padman (2018) highlights the issue of Menstrual Hygiene, Pink (2016) highlights the issue of consent and Matrabhoomi (2003) on the issue of Female Foeticide.

In such films, too often, a female protagonist plays the "hero"; in a film, she is forced to wear the invisible masculinity. However, within the subtlety, we often misunderstand the patriarchal emphasis of male macho-ism portrayed in a female's body. For instance, characters like Shivani (Rani Mukherjee in Mardaani) and Meera (Anushka Sharma in NH10) established strong masculine female characters. However, they needed a "male character" to infuse energy into them.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 19.2

1. Why is media referred to as a "watchdog"?
2. List all forms of print media.
3. What is meant by the objectification of women?
4. How has the role of women in cinema evolved over the years? Explain.

19.4 ELECTRONIC MEDIA - TELEVISION AND RADIO

Television has been a medium which has shown spectacular growth over time. Television is called the most real form of media. It represents women on T.V. and affects the mindset of those who watch it specially, the negative and debasing image of women as represented in commercial advertisements and serials. Sex stereotype is also evident in television in portraying men and women in their appointed roles.

Television serials have undergone a considerable transformation in the last two decades. The serials have moved a great deal from the portrayal of strong women characters like Pallavi Joshi and Shaifali Chhaya as Air Force officers in the Aarohan programme of the 1990s inspired middle-class girls and women and challenged the mainstream ideology. Instead, most soaps show "home" or the domestic sphere as the core set. The fundamental theme is centred on women, with the primary concern on family relationships, either playing the role of a vamp who creates problems or playing a good daughter-in-law or loving wife in serials. In this context, women's achievement is valued for running a successful household, settling down in matrimonial bliss, bearing children and trying to be 'ideal' human beings.

Advertising

The power of advertising to persuade, manipulate, and shape behaviour has long been recognised. Most people realise that the images in the media rarely reflect reality. However, that does not mean that these images are not influential. Advertisements often represent a fantasy or ideal image of how things should be. There used to be advertisements mostly related to women's beauty products. However, some products for men's beauty, e.g. fairness creams, hair gels, etc., are also advertised. Specifically, they help to reinforce how an ideal woman or a man should look and behave. Women sell everything- food, clothing, washing powders, cars, computers, creams- anti-wrinkle and anti-pimple creams. They even market shaving lotions and underwear, at times exposing their bodies. Such advertisements exploit their sexuality and commodity. Advertisements for various deodorants show women crazy to run and flock over to men using these. Such advertisements are highly regressive and depict women as if they do not possess any sense of judgment.

Notes

It is said that Indian viewers now spend more time watching the news than reading it. This is because T.V. news channels in India compete for more viewership, and more and more sensational types of news programmes are being created, vying for public attention and ultimately improving their television rating points (T.R.P.s). NDTV, CNN-IBN, Headlines Today, Times Now, Aaj Tak, Star News, NDTV India, and India TV are popular news channels that show news 24X7. The question that arises is, do we need 24X7 rolling news? It seems that many of the news channels, by and large, are working on the old strategy of creating one package for different time bands. Gender and related issues are ignored by the news channels that often depend on Bollywood and teleserial stars for their survival. Most news channels sensationalise news related to celebrities - what do they do or eat to stay in shape, which gym they go to, who are they friends with, whom are they having affairs with, who are on the verge of break-ups, marriage or divorce etc. and tirelessly present the content for hours for T.R.Ps. Though with time, things have changed a little, and there is coverage of positive stories related to women, they considerably lag in comparison to the major part of sensationalising murder mysteries of celebrities(e.g. Arushi Murder case), and Jiya Khan, Bollywood film actress) or about the untimely demise of Sri Devi.

How credible is the media? What portion of news is devoted to women's issues or women as victims of circumstances, of their bodies and course, of men? Ironically the voices raised over such matters do not get space in the media. What about news on laws related to women, awareness of women's issues in India, especially education on health, work-life issues, domestic violence, sexual harassment and successful career women in different, innovative work segments? Very few channels highlight issues women face in India, and that too occasionally.

The context of the violence portrayed and the viewer's age is most important. Also significant is the participant's ability to differentiate between fantasy and reality and justified or unjustified use of force. The three factors in this triadic model do not necessarily make equal contributions. The influence of an Individual, Environment, or Behavior depends on which particular factor is strongest at a particular moment. For example, Bandura studied to scrutinise whether social behaviours like aggression can be acquired by observation and imitation. His experiment revealed that children learn by observing the behaviour of others. Television programming portrays interpersonal violence, much of it in an entertaining and glamorised manner. Prolonged exposure to such media portrayals increases acceptance of violence as an appropriate means of problem-solving and achieving one's goals.

19.5 FOLK MEDIA

Folk media refers to the channels of communication embedded in social, cultural, and psychological thinking, exhibiting the values and lifestyle of the people. These rich cultural reservoirs promote local language and remain an integral part of the socio-cultural and religious part of communities. It includes oral traditions, customs, and rituals which are complex

communication resources. It generally includes different art forms like folk theatre, street theatre, folk dance, folk music and songs, paintings, puppetry, traditional motifs, designs and symbols, traditional games, fairs and festivals, storytelling and traditional youth clubs etc.

Unlike mass media, folk media has its ties to traditional social spaces and represents the homogeneity of a particular society. It is a non-electronic medium used to transmit tradition from one generation to another. Since ancient times, people in local communities have engaged in folk dances and songs, rituals and festivals etc., which are part of their daily lives. The lifestyle, perceptions, social approval, relations, and value systems are communicated through folk media. It is also used to exhibit social views on sex, gender, education, health, and social perception, and interestingly adapt to newer values and situations.

In earlier times, folk media were patriarchal primarily in their structure and presentation. Women had to forgo certain privileges and rights regarded as exclusive to men. They were constantly exhibited as inferior to their male counterparts, presented only in the roles of mothers, sisters, wives, and daughters, being confined to the four walls of their homes. They were shown proud women who would forgo their lives to care for their family members. While women were shown as dedicated nurturers and physically attractive, men were shown as breadwinners, protectors of women, and the head of families.

Figure 19.1 Folk Media

Figure 19.2 Folk Media: A Kathakali Performance

Thus, folk traditions and symbols established the social norms for individuals, groups, and communities. For example, the traditional drums of Khasis use instruments to reinforce the patriarchal social norms. Khasis is a tribe in Meghalaya in North-East India that classifies drums as male drums and female drums. The male drums are played during ceremonial rituals, whereas female drums are played during festival dances. This is co-related to Khasis; while men conduct all the rituals, women are not even allowed to witness some ceremonies. They have a famous saying, "Khasis U Rang Khatar Bor", which means "A man has twelve powers", and "Ka Thei Shibor", which entails that "A woman has one power".

Gradually, contemporary folk media have undergone some shifts not only in their content but also in their treatment and presentation. These can become powerful media to connect with people and bring awareness on various issues such as positive images of women, changing roles of men and women, women empowerment, and portraying men as partners and protectors.

Folk media can be used in contemporary times as a purposeful art form to discuss issues sensitive to society. For example, health issues might not be appropriate for face-to-face communication, but the intended message can be easily disseminated through folk media. Likewise, issues like Immunization, HIV/AIDS, Family Welfare, dowry, early marriage, construction of toilets etc. can be effectively prompted by these media forms.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 19.3

1. Explain the credibility of media in our lives.
2. Define Folk Media.
3. How do traditional media serve the purpose of communication?

19.6 SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is a vast collective of online communication channels that is becoming an integral part of our day-to-day lives. The most prominent social media platforms are Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Snapchat, Google+, Wikipedia, etc. Nevertheless, even on social media, one exhibits gender-specific behaviours. For example, it is known through research that men are more likely to use social media platforms to seek information and start new relationships; while women tend to be drawn to such platforms to connect with people they already know.

Social media plays a massive role in our lives. It allows networking opportunities and brings the communities closer by disseminating messages and opinions. However, like other forms of

Notes

media, even messages perpetrated through social media influence the mindsets of its audience, especially the youth. A research study examined how teenage males and females utilise social media platforms and found gender differences in usage patterns. Fifty-seven (57) per cent of the teens reported starting new friendships online. However, only 20 percent met their online friends in real life. The low self-esteem of females directly affects their social media usage patterns. For instance, males are more likely to use authoritative language than females. Females, on the other hand, use words more emotionally. A study examined 15.4 million Facebook status updates by 68,000 Facebook users. It found that females generally used more positive emotions like 'love', 'happy', and 'excited'; and social relationships like 'friends' and 'family'. On the other hand, males used more fact-oriented words related to subjects like politics and sports- 'tax', 'government', 'football' etc.

Women have been facing a lot of unfavourable and abusive responses as and when they voice their opinions. This is purely a reaction based on their gender. This was proved with the help of an experiment conducted by a male who spoofed a Twitter account. He found the responses more negative and abusive when the Twitter account was portrayed as owned by a female. The most common forms of harassment witnessed at social networking sites are constant criticism, highly abusive and aggressive language usage patterns.

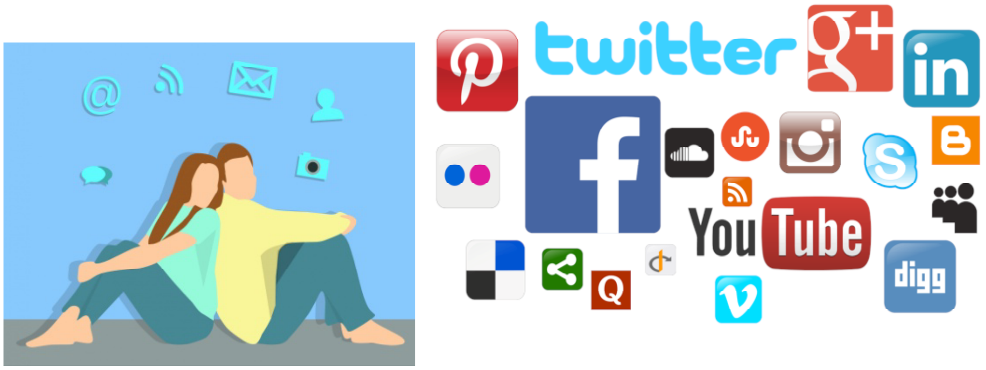


Figure 19.3 Social Media

Commercial advertisements appearing at social media, like other media platforms, reinforce gender-stereotypical norms. For example, females are generally portrayed objectifying their bodies or are seen in commercials involving domestic and cosmetic products. Male ads, on the other hand, often involve cars, insurance & investments, and business products.

Social networking sites can potentially encourage social, political, and economic empowerment and promote gender equality. The HeForShe Campaign, for example, was initiated by the United Nations on social media. It attempted to use social media to close the gender gap between men and women.

Community Radio

Community radio is a type of radio service that serves a particular community and is also run by that community. It is free from the authority of the market and profit-making in its functioning. Community radio derived its basic objective from the fundamental principles of democracy of entailing equal and active participation in freedom of speech and expression. It is managed, controlled, and run by the community for the needs, aspirations, and interests of the community.

Why is community radio an important medium?

Community radio gives a viable platform to marginalised communities to raise their voices on issues that do not receive adequate attention in public and private radio services. It allows them to express their views and opinions not duly heard in the mainstream media. It enables individuals, groups and communities to share their stories and experiences and contribute substantial content to the media. It is a two-way process that empowers people to identify problems and seek solutions. Community radio can potentially encourage the participation of the most marginalised in decisions for positive changes. It is a dynamic and non-commercial medium for grassroots communication.

How does Community Ratio empower women?

It is imperative to focus on women's participation as they are the most marginalised, most unheard in the public domain and discriminated against in access to and participation in mainstream media. Community radio has traditionally been inclusive, thereby enabling a range of women to exercise their communication rights. Several Community radio stations are being run by women, managing technology, content and participation of people. An impressive number of women work in community radios nationwide, mainly as producers, on-air, and station managers.

19.7 PARTICIPATORY VIDEO

Participatory video is an interactive group process that builds participants' capacities to communicate with others. The group members are required to record themselves and the world around them in a video. This enables them to communicate their own stories in creative ways. In addition, video production provides a powerful medium for the participants to explore their local situations and collectively reflect on their experiences. Thus, it is "Media by the Community."

How are participatory videos different from usual film-making?

Participatory videos are an interactive process that aims to build the participants' social influence. They help in establishing collaborative relationships and catalyse collective group actions. Participants reflect on their situation together, deepen their understanding of the real

Notes

picture of the issue, and develop ways forward. It gained much attention due to two main reasons:

1. It does not require conventional literacy to operate the media

2. The engagement of the audience in this method is much more than in any other medium.

Fig 19.4. Images of Particpatory Video

How are participatory videos helpful?

- Participatory videos enable participants to rapidly learn how to use the video equipment through workshops, exercises, and games.
- The facilitators help the community members to identify prominent issues in and around their community and showcase these through participatory video methods.
- The videos can be shared with the wider community through daily group screenings and Sabhas.
- It is a dynamic and ongoing process of community-led learning and exchanging of ideas, which sets sharing in motion.
- Community members have ownership as they are involved in varied degrees during video making.
- Participatory video as an approach can potentially transform the way we move towards more significant social equity and human compassion needed for the true development of a society.

Participatory media has become a powerful tool for the masses as they give freedom to the people to express their issues and empowers them by amplifying their voices through the power of media. Thus, participatory video for development is an excellent medium to connect with people at the local level.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 19.4

1. Define the concept of community radio.
2. How is a community radio different from a commercial radio station?
3. What kind of issues can be addressed through community radio platforms?
4. What is 'Media by Community'?
5. How are participatory videos helpful for gender sensitivity?

WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

- Media can be used positively to propagate healthier values in our society. This is because media has acquired a remarkable capacity to set new trends, bring social transformation and reduce social injustice.
- Digital players have entered the mass communication field through the internet platform. They have provided people with an alternative medium of information and communication. The news gets delivered on demand through computers, laptops, mobile phones and other communicating devices.
- The primacy of a woman's traditional role as a mother and a wife is reiterated in almost all forms of media. However, a few filmmakers have tried to break away from this and give more real roles to women actors like Dum Laga Ke Haisha, English Vinglish, Dor and more.
- The major parts of Indian cinema portray men pursuing their dreams, aspirations, desires, and heroism. The women are primarily shown as their lovers, wives, or mothers. A woman is rarely seen acting independently and making her own decisions.
- The relationship between media depictions of violence and subsequent violent behaviour is highly complex. Several interacting variables play an essential role in determining who will be affected, by what material, and in what way. The context of violence and the age of the viewer are the most important variables for determining the potential impact of violence.
- Folk media has its ties to traditional social spaces and represents the homogeneity of a particular society.
- Social networking sites hold the potential to encourage social, political, and economic empowerment and promote gender equality.

Notes

- The new media technologies are more interactive than traditional media and tend to incorporate two-way communication.
- Hashtag activism has brought women's issues to the forefront of the political discourse.
- Using social media for online activism is restricted for many women due to illiteracy, language barriers, and the digital divide. These factors mainly affect rural women.
- Community radio gives a platform to marginalised communities to raise their voices about issues that do not receive adequate attention in public and private radio services. Community radio helps communities in remote parts of the country to integrate at national and global levels. It has been known to improve governance by enabling people to hold the local government for the timely delivery of services.
- Participatory videos are an interactive process which aims to build the social influence of the participants. They help in establishing collaborative relationships and catalyse collective group actions. The participants reflect on their situation together, deepen their understanding of the accurate picture of the issue and come up with ways forward.

TERMINAL EXERCISE

1. How do media impact our perception of gender roles?
2. How can print media be used to promote gender equality?
3. What challenges does print media face in enabling change in people's mindsets regarding gender roles and expectations?
4. Illustrate with an example that cinema significantly impacts the masses and gender sensitivity.
5. Do you think television serials have created an unrealistic image of women? Justify your answer with suitable examples.
6. How can folk media be used to address social issues and gender discrimination in rural area?
7. What has been the role of social media in promoting and designing campaigns to empower women?
8. How are participatory videos different from usual films? How can they be used to increase women's participation in development activities?
9. How is community radio used to empower women?

Notes

ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

19.1

1. The socialisation process immediately starts after birth and decides an individual's attributed roles and responsibilities per their gender.

2. Media is the plural form of the word 'medium', 'one of the means of general communication, information, or entertainment in society, as newspaper, radio, or television'. It subscribes to the mode of communication through various electronic and print channels.

3. It is important to analyse the representation of gender in media critically. It is the first step necessary to provide evidence to the media producers and sensitise them to be progressive in their outlook. Furthermore, they must be aware of their critical role in triggering change with changing times.

19.2

1. Mass media has long been responsible for being society's watchdog and is liable to guide social change. A watchdog refers to a person, institution or organisation that monitors and publicises the behaviour of others to discover the activities are not in the interest of society.

2. Print media is one of the oldest and most basic forms of mass communication. It includes newspapers, journals, weeklies, monthlies, and other printed media forms.

3. Despite a few Bollywood films' progress, the objectification of women persists, as seen through the exotic item numbers. The primacy of a woman's traditional role as a mother and a wife is reiterated. The woman's dress appearance reinforces cultural signs like the mangal sutra and sindoor as the symbols of marriage.

4. Hindi cinema has been a significant source of propagating Indian culture in our society. It has long been the platform for exhibiting the changing scenarios of modern India that no other medium can do at such a scale. It can potentially influence the viewers' perception of their life perspectives. Over the past few years, films have been claimed to break the stereotypes related to women. To name a few, the roles played by Nargis in Mother India (1957), Priyanka Chopra in Fashion (2008), and Waheeda Rehman in Guide (1957) have been quite powerful for the times in which they were made.

Notes

19.3.

1. News devoted to women's issues or women as victims of circumstances of their bodies and men do not get space in media. So the news on laws related to women, awareness of women's issues in India, especially education on health, work-life issues, domestic violence, sexual harassment and successful career women in different, innovative segments of worktop are not highlighted. Very few channels highlight issues women face in India, and that too occasionally. This undermines the credibility of the media.

2. Folk media refers to the channels of communication embedded in social, cultural, and psychological thinking, exhibiting the values and lifestyle of the people. These rich cultural reservoirs promote local language and remain an integral part of the socio-cultural and religious part of communities. It includes oral traditions, customs, and rituals which are complex communication resources. It generally includes different art forms like folk theatre, street theatre, folk dance, folk music and songs, paintings, puppetry, traditional motifs, designs and symbols, traditional games, fairs and festivals, storytelling and traditional youth clubs etc.

3. Folk media can become powerful media to connect with people and bring awareness on various issues, such as positive images of women, changing the roles of men and women, women empowerment, and portraying men as partners and protectors. Moreover, folk media can be used in contemporary times as a purposeful art form to discuss issues sensitive to society. For example, health issues might not be appropriate for face-to-face communication, but the intended message can be easily disseminated through folk media. Moreover, issues like Immunization, HIV/AIDS, Family Welfare, dowry, early marriage, construction of toilets etc., can be effectively prompted by these media forms.

19.4

1. Community radio is a type of radio service that serves a particular community and is also run by that community. It is free from the authority of the market and profit-making in its functioning. Community radio derived its basic objective from the fundamental principles of democracy of entailing equal and active participation in freedom of speech and expression. The community manages, controls, and runs it for its needs, aspirations, and interests.

2. Community radio gives a viable platform to marginalised communities to raise their voices on issues that do not receive adequate attention in public and private radio services. It allows them to express their views and opinions not duly heard in the mainstream media. It enables individuals, groups and communities to share their

Notes

stories and experiences and contribute substantial content to the media. It is a two-way process that empowers people to identify problems and seek solutions.

3, Community radio has traditionally been inclusive, thereby enabling a range of women to exercise their communication rights. Several Community radio stations are being run by women, managing technology, content and participation of people.

4. Participatory video is an interactive group process that builds the participants' capacities to communicate with others. The group members are required to record themselves and the world around them in a video. This enables them to communicate their own stories in creative ways. In addition, video production provides a powerful medium for the participants to explore their local situations and collectively reflect on their experiences. Thus, it is "Media by the Community."

5. Participatory media has become a powerful tool for the masses as it gives people the freedom to express their issues and empowers them by amplifying their voices through the power of media. Thus, participatory video for development is an excellent medium to connect with people at the local level.

20

NEW MEDIA AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Media is the fourth pillar of democracy and has immense power to act as the watchdog of society and is also an effective and powerful tool to bring social change. It brings mass awareness of political, economic and social issues and creates public opinion, which is important to bring social change.

In the previous lesson, you read about the impact of print and visual media on society. This chapter discusses the role and impact of new media social change as an agent. 'New Media Technologies' are very popular. The new media technologies are a group of online communication channels devoted to information, connection, substance and coordinated effort. Social media, blogs, virtual reality, online newspapers and digital games are part of new media technologies. All these channels are very interactive and incorporate two-way communications. Old media channels like radio and television are less interactive and more one-way. Channels like Netflix and Youtube offer market-driven content. Electioneering also depends upon new media, which has become a solid and active channel for bringing social change.

OUTCOMES

After studying this lesson, learner:

- explains the new media technology;
- understands the role of new media as an agent of social change;
- assess the need for sensitive and empathetic representation of women in media;
- evaluates the media content that perpetuates myths and superstitions.

Notes

20.1 NEW MEDIA: CONCEPT AND COMPONENTS

New media can be described as mass communication using digital technologies such as the internet. Some examples of new media are telephones, computers, virtual worlds, single media, website games, human-computer interfaces, and interactive computer installations. It is interactive with two-way communication and forms of computing.

New media can also be described as the content made available from different forms of communication made through the world wide web and smartphone technology. New media differs from traditional media, i.e. Radio, Television, Newspapers and other print publications. New media has six main characteristics: Digital, interactive, hypertextual, virtual, networked and Stimulated.

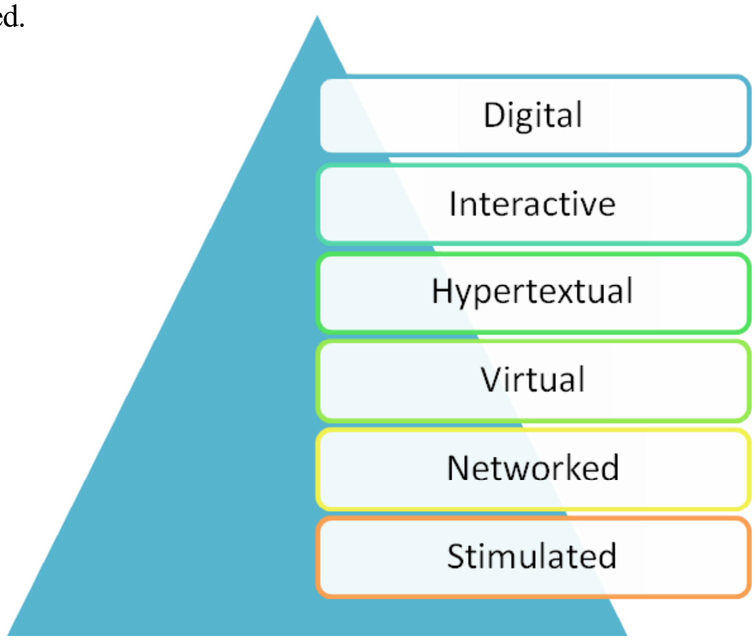


Fig 20.1:Characterstics of New Media

New Media has diferent formats such as Mashap, internet art, videogames, multimedia CD-ROMs, software, websites, blogs and wikis, email and attachments. In addition, the new media allows sharing content with others.

Moreover, the new media users are active producers and distributors of content and information. If we tend to travel in cyberspace, we should choose the internet rather than any material form of knowledge. The power of new media guides us through a virtual space.

Mainstream traditional media is highly centralised and costly to establish and maintain. New media is decentralised and cost-effective in operations. It needs low investment, provides greater interactivity and public participation and can be controlled . New media is very popular in society, and people can create their News and access the other side of the story by getting News from the internet, which is free from governmental control.

Notes

The media shows stories of the victims of discrimination, and many people respond and contribute to show solidarity. It facilitates people to express their opinion without favour or fear. It works very fast, and within minutes, the people are engaged with each other

Media is also said to be responsible for the social upliftment of society. Media shows an accurate picture of society and helps to shape public opinion by influencing personal beliefs. Its role has now extended beyond the mere supply of information. New media allows people to act both as transmitters as well as producers. It is active in portraying the condition of society, especially of women, and is also here to raise the voice against discrimination and inequality.

'Cyber-feminism' is the new trend in the new media. For example, the '#Me Too' campaign spread virally and revealed the real stories of women's exploitation in the workplace. It helped sensitive people on issues of sexual harassment in the workplace for women. Such movements mobilise public opinion and compel the government to enact new laws.

Social media is more transparent, engaging and interactive. Young people are more attracted to the new modes of social media. Although it is consuming their time since they remain busy on the social internet, the number of users is increasing exponentially. About 500 million users and 50% of them log on daily. The information posted on social media attracts the attention of youth. The Supreme Court of India has advocated for freedom on social media. The impact of social media is immense. Nowadays, even election campaigns are run on social media.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 20.1

1. Explain the meaning of New Media.
2. List the essential components of New Media.
3. Highlight the importance of New Media to bring social change.

20.2 NEW MEDIA AS AN AGENT OF SOCIAL CHANGE FROM A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

Online portals like Twitter, Facebook and blogs provide a huge platform to communicate and exchange ideas, problems, happenings and events. It is not wrong to say that it has become an important medium of social change. An idea transformed in words and posted online can change people's outlook. It encourages supporters and critics to voice their concerns. Anyone can share ideas and experiences on the net; others may join to give their viewpoint. Thus a system of thinking about an idea' starts and helps to form public opinion. Netizens (this name knows new media users) help build a smart and sustainable concept or idea. It helps bring positive and negative changes by moulding ideas and attitudes. It also influences lifestyle and culture by creating awareness of gender discrimination and its ill effects. It is often seen that

media challenges the gender attitude of society. Most of the time, women are portrayed in a stereotyped fashion, physically attractive and weak. Though new trends are emerging and bold stories of women are gaining space in the new media, huge marketing campaigns are still based on women's physical attraction and beauty.

The media can both retard and accelerate the process of gender equality. In addition, the media can inform the results of the efforts made in this direction, but it may also produce gender stereotypes.

In the traditional media, the basics and issues of women's empowerment has not given much attention as it is supposed to be. The issues of equality, justice, respect and dignity of women have not been given due importance. Instead, it has thrived on saleability. Media had been showing the News of rape or violence against women not as a cause but to raise the level of viewership. New media has entered this area as a reliable tool to influence people. The new media had mobilised the people on the incidence of the Nirbhaya Rape case and other similar issues of social concern

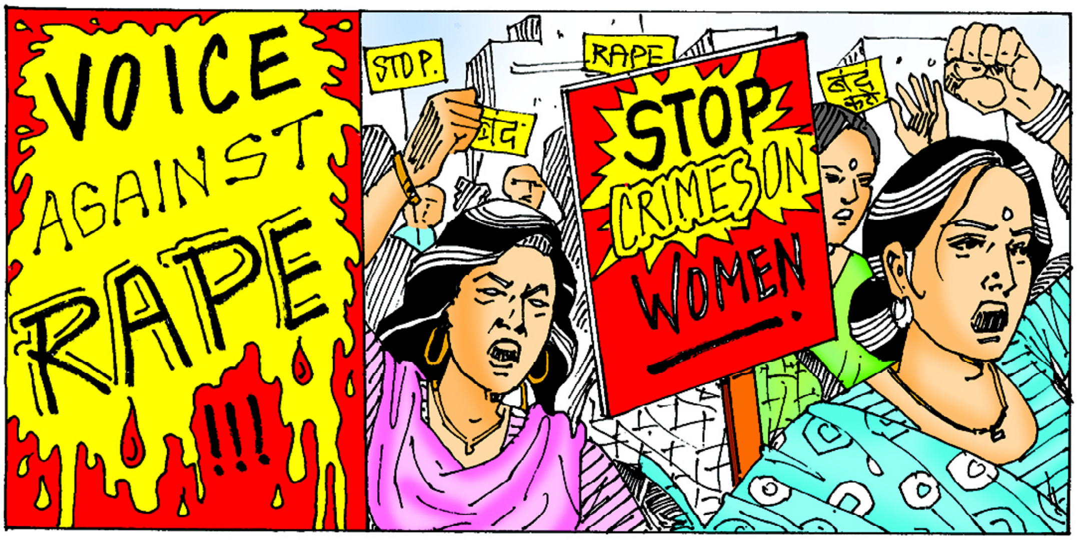


Fig 20.2. Support for Women's cause in internet

New media is being used to spread awareness and also to initiate action. More and more women are in the media and raising concerns. Representation of women in the Panchayati Raj system and local self-governments has also increased and has given women a strong voice. The way women are being portrayed in the News raises the media's hope for gender sensitivity and equality.

The portrayal of different issues makes us informed, excited, provoked and hopeful. Unfortunately, our opinions and actions are mostly based on how these issues are portrayed in the media. Media is working for fair treatment of women. Producers and media users must have the skills to counter the stereotypes and allow room for the fair portrayal of people and their issues.

20.3 NEED FOR SENSITIVE AND EMPATHETIC REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN INDIA THROUGH NEW MEDIA

Mass media has always been responsible for being the watchdog of society, guiding change in society. However, the current media is dominated by 'men', so the issues related to women do not get the required attention. Media products are created mostly by men; hence women do not get the justified space and portrayal. Media cover the atrocities on women but neglect the achievements of women. Even coverage of such issues is biased. Women are depicted as weak and interested in domestic affairs like cooking, washing and family care. They are depicted as homemakers, and their contribution to the field of business, politics and academics is not given prominence. Even in New Media, women are represented in terms of their physical beauty and sexy image.

New media has provided the conditions to be closer to other parts of the world. Different new media components are cost-effective for spreading the word and getting support. Hashtag activism enables gender issues to be at the forefront of the political agenda. Various NGOs are working relentlessly towards giving people hope for change, like the recent 'Gulabi Gang', which was helped by various NGOs to tackle the issues related to women. Women have been victims of discrimination and have never been allowed to express themselves in the traditional media. Hence there is a need for sensitive and empathetic media to support the cause of gender equality and equity in society.

20.4 MEDIA AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Media has played an essential role in the developments such as the fight against racism, gender bias, and poverty and spreading awareness about gender sensitivity. The portrayal of women in media conveys a direct message to people at large. On the other hand, the coy and weak portrayal of women in media leads to likewise opinion-making away from the masses. The stereotypical portrayal of women sets a dangerous precedent since people form opinions against the spirit of gender equality. Many advertisements are contributing to this process of change.

In the contemporary new media, more women are represented as decision makers, independent and bread earners, contributing to an average perception of women. For instance, some advertisements show the redefined concept of redefining the workplace and home wherein the wife has a leading role in the company. For instance, the Tanishq ad breaks multiple stereotypical representations of women. It portrays the wedding of a woman who is dark-skinned and has a young daughter. In another Premier league advertisement, a mother-in-law encouraging the daughter-in-law to sit with the family and enjoy shows a healthy change in gender representation.

Notes

During the Nirbhaya case (Rape and murder of a young girl), new media played a significant role. Thousands of people were mobilised at India Gate to protest against the heinous crime. The new media built an atmosphere of concern against such crimes. As a result, a change in society was visible.

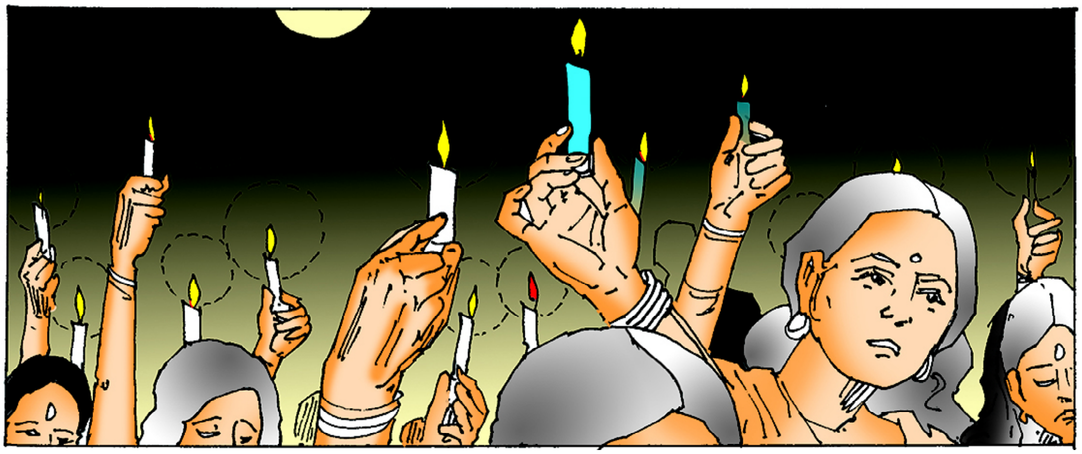


Fig 20.3. Support for social cause

These deep short films, participatory films, stories of successful women, and new quotes about women are getting viral on the new media components and are creating awareness of gender issues. Change can also be seen in mainstream cinema.

Films like Pink (girls living independently), Dangal (girl wrestlers) or Sultan have portrayed women in bold and strong characters.

20.4.1. Freedom of expression and Gender Equality

Gender equality is an important component of freedom of expression. Both are interlinked and interdependent. You can not have one without the other. Both go hand in hand. Unfortunately, the media itself is lacking in providing this freedom. We see an imbalance in the proportion of women and men in the decision-making roles in different media organisations. A few women are on the boards of media organisations, and the policies to promote gender equality are lacking in spirit. However, no reliable and consistent data is available on gender equality; without the data, it is difficult to assess the problem. Freedom of expression should be protected at all costs. Media should be free from the fear of censorship. Media should depict different forms of atrocities committed on women and give women space to speak out and support their own cause.

20.4.2 Women and decision making

Gender equality is not visible in media houses. Women are in the minority, and men hold technology-driven positions. Although the number of women is increasing in newsrooms, the

position of high-level decision-making is still dominated by men. The media content is biased and male dominance is visible. More transparent and responsible media should address the lack of gender sensitivity. Some new initiatives are being made in the film industry, advertising industry and newsrooms to address the lack of equality between men and women.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 20.2

1. Explain the way media can change society.
2. Explain the difference between the traditional depiction and modern depiction of women.
3. Highlight the role of new media in eradicating gender discrimination.
4. Cite any three examples of advertisements that depict women in a new avatar (strong, independent and decision-maker)

WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

- Media is the fourth pillar of democracy. It brings awareness about political, economic and social issues. Moreover, it creates public opinion, which becomes a vehicle for social change.
- New media can be described as mass communication using digital technologies such as the internet. Some examples of new media are telephones, computers, virtual worlds, single media, website games, human-computer interfaces, and interactive computer installations. It is interactive and involves two-way communication and also some form of computing.
- Media is said to be responsible for social upliftment. This is because it shows an accurate picture of society and helps to form a public opinion by influencing personal beliefs.
- Twitter, Facebook, blogs and many other new media channels have become effective mediums of social change. New media is raising social issues and especially the issue of gender discrimination and gender equity. Any idea converted into words is communicated at a breakneck speed. Portraying different issues makes us informed, excited, provoked and hopeful. However, there is a need for sensitive and empathetic representation of women through the new media.
- Women should be there in the media. Women's political representation should increase, and they must have freedom of expression. New media is fast media, two-way communication and is very interactive. Its impact is immense. Even electioneering nowadays depends on the new media.

TERMINAL EXERCISE

1. Define the New Media.

2. Differentiate between traditional media and new media.

3. Why is the media said to be an agent of social change?

4. Explain the need for a sensitive and empathetic representation of women in media.

5. How can New Media help to achieve gender equality and equity?

6. Explain the impact of New Media on society.

ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

20.1

1. New media is described as mass communication using digital technologies such as the internet.

2. Twitter, Facebook, blogs, etc.

3. New media is fast, interactive and cost-effective. An idea transformed into words and posted online can change people's perspectives.

20.2

1. Media makes people aware of different issues. Users of the new media participate in this interaction and form a public opinion which helps to change society's outlook.

2. In traditional media, women were seen as weak homemakers and subordinates. These days women are working in offices and companies, have independence and have the economic power to spend money earned by them. Modern depiction of women is that of bold, accessible and a decision maker in all walks of society.

3. New media is working against gender discrimination. Women have high positions in the media and raise the issues of women harassment and domestic violence against women.

   New media depicts women at par with men. Women have occupied all the posts and places in men's control.